

TRANSFORMING THE GREATER SAINT LUKE AFRICAN
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH THROUGH
DISCIPLESHIP AND MINISTRIES

Herbert Temoney

BA, Allen University, 1992
MDiv, Payne Theological Seminary, 2008

Mentors

Gerald Young, DMin
Alfred Thompson, DMin

A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
January 2016

CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| ABSTRACT..... | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS..... | v |
| DEDICATION..... | vii |
| EPIGRAPH..... | ix |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1. MINISTRY FOCUS..... | 3 |
| 2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS..... | 22 |
| Old Testament | |
| New Testament | |
| 3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS..... | 53 |
| 4. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS..... | 71 |
| 5. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS..... | 87 |
| 6. PROJECT ANALYSIS..... | 103 |
| Introduction | |
| Methodology | |
| Implementation | |
| Conclusions | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 133 |

ABSTRACT

TRANSFORMING THE GREATER SAINT LUKE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP AND MINISTRIES

by
Herbert Temoney
United Theological Seminary, 2015

Mentors

Gerald Young, DMin
Alfred Thompson, DMin

This project examined the spiritual growth and maturity of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC). The objective of this research was to assess and implement a model, which insures that spiritual maturity is achieved. The African Methodist Episcopal Church has traditionally combined evangelism and discipleship together as a single model; therefore, this church is not growing by the model it was given by the AMEC. This qualitative research addressed the spiritual maturity of Greater Saint Luke AMEC, and following the survey, a training model was implemented, designed to focus on the individual's spiritual growth and development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to my friends, the Reverends Carlos Taylor and Justin Semell for their friendship during this Doctoral process. I am appreciative of their feedback and challenge. We were a compassionate group whom God ordained and set apart.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to the United Theological Seminary located in Dayton, Ohio for affording me an opportunity to excel in theological education and offering me as one of the doctor's of the church.

My most appreciation is given to the Greater St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church family located in the Holy City of Charleston, South Carolina for their love, support, and dedication. My Professional Associates: Reverend Drs. Charles R. Watkins Jr., Lavern Witherspoon and Lawrence Gordon as well as my Peer Associate Rev. Carlos Taylor and Rev. Justin Shemell who have already been mentioned.

I am thankful for Dr. G. Martin Young, my mentor who worked extremely hard as we attempted to Grow the Church without Walls during these conservative years. To Dr. Alfred Thompson who came in with four young men to be added to our group as we changed our name to "Growing the Church without Walls Through Effective Preaching, and Stewardship in the 21st Century."

Finally, I am thankful for my wife Kim, my children, and my grandson for their prayers, love, and encouraging me to become one of the doctors of the church. Most especially my late parents, Robert and Vermell Temoney as I am the last of thirteen

children and the first to receive an undergraduate and a graduate degree. To God be the glory!

DEDICATION

I am grateful to God almighty who has kept and sustained me, who has kept my family intact allowing no hurt harm or danger to consume them as I pursued my dream to become a doctor of the church. To my father, the late Robert Temoney, Sr. who taught the true meaning of discipleship and evangelism at an early age. Even though he did not live long enough to see the fruition of the seed he planted, however, because his seed was planted in fertile soil, his legacy will live on. To my mother, the late Vermell McCauley Temoney, whose wisdom supersedes one of extensive theological training, which always acknowledged that although she did not have the academic training of most theologians, she knew, believed, and instilled in me that God is able to supply all of our needs according to His riches in heaven. She used every opportunity to teach and train her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and all that came knocking at her door.

To my mother in law, Mrs. Gwendolyn Hudson-Jefferson and my father in law, the late Harry Jefferson, Jr. for giving me one of their most prized possessions, their second born daughter Kimberly Z. In her, they have raised a woman of great morals, self-worth, and self-respect. Most especially to my mother in law who is always encouraging and supportive.

To my lovely wife Kimberly Z.; my Kim for her untiring love and devotion, always pushing and encouraging, wanting nothing but the best for me. Kim took care of our home and our children as she stood in for me at missed school and church events as I completed this milestone.

To my children, Herbert Clayton, Justin Akeim, Shawndolyn Alexis and Jovonte'
Sentel who never grumbled or felt slighted when my studies kept me away from their
activities, but encouraged me along the way.

EPIGRAPHS

No matter how long the road, at some point it ends! At the end of the road it may be a good ending or a bad ending, however, you, your actions determine the outcome at the end of the road!

—Word of Wisdom from my mother the Late Mrs. Vermell McCauley Temoney

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the African Methodist Episcopal Church has been teaching discipleship and evangelism as a single yet combined model, which has caused a detriment in our church. If discipleship teaching is done in a single model, it will be more effective than that of the traditional teaching of evangelism and discipleship together as a single model. In addition, the teaching will be less confusing and will offer a more profound view on following and modeling the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

In chapter one, I give a synopsis of my family history, challenges and share the difficulties of my personal life story which ushered me into the presence of God and connected me to my spiritual journey.

In chapter two, the reader will see the comparison of the biblical scriptures that were used to link the Old and New Testament books together as I seek to bring clarification to my journey as it relates to evangelism and discipleship. In the Book of Exodus 18:3-18, Moses' father-in-law offered him a recommendation to omit him in handling judicial matters, and assessing the needs of the Israelites. Moses delegates his authority to those who were capable of assisting him. In the Book of St. Matthew 28:18-20, Christ is giving authority to eleven ordinary Galilean men, empowering them to spread of the Gospel.

Chapter three gives a historical perspective of Charleston, South Carolina, known today as the "Holy City," the teaching of African American Christians, and a census

report on the current situation in Charleston. It describes the struggles of Black people, the restraints on Black worship, Black churches and the life and death of Denmark Vesey.

Chapter four presents a theological platform that launches an in-depth definition of theology and its relationship with the scriptures.

Chapter five gives a descriptive of the project's context and the issues that confronts the current pastor. It also includes recommendations from the pastor that will help the members toward spiritual growth and maturity.

Chapter six gives a description of the tools used to gather information to substantiate the project's research. These tools were used to provide a full diagnostic of the problem and arrive at a credible solution to decreased church growth and spiritual maturity within the life of the context.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Life in a fallen world has many challenges and difficulties. We never know where life will take us or what we will face. We have experiences where it looks like God has forsaken us and we face one difficulty after another. As I reflect upon my life, there are many situations where I could have died but God has been faithful and gracious. There have been situations where I faced difficulty, and through it all, God has demonstrated His trustworthiness. Many times, it has caused me to wonder as the songwriter says, "Does Jesus Care?"

Upon reflection, God is the anchor holding my life. I have faced situations where I have faltered, failed, and fallen. In a fallen world, adversity is a norm. No one escapes life without facing some adversity. As we mature, it is faith in God, which enables us to handle every challenge. God anchors us through every trial, God sustains us through every difficulty, and God upholds us in the midst of the storm. It is true; we can handle life's adversities with an assurance because of our relationship with God. God is not only the savior of my Soul; God is the savior of my life.

The saints of old would sing, "We have come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord." I have come to know this not only intuitively but also experientially. I am where I am and survived encounters with death, and encountered personal tragedy in my family with the death of family members. However, through it all, God has been my constant

friend. Faith is rooted in the infallible teaching of Jesus Christ. In Hebrew 11:1, Paul informs, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Knowledge of faith will carry us as it encouraged the faith of Daniel. This vision described by Daniel reaffirms that even though we experience trials and are judged often by many, our hearts should remain encouraged. When situations rise and spin out of control, we must remain faithful and trust in His deliverance!

My ancestors faced great racial injustices and were forced to relinquish land they had always known and raising their children on. Verbal ownership of the land was acknowledged but the official deed to the property was not granted. The inheritance my grandparents earned through labor, which was designated for their children and grandchildren was also taken. As grandchildren, we were denied their legacy. The life of my ancestors can be compared to the children of Israel as described in Deuteronomy 26:5-9. My ancestors came from humble beginnings where they worked and toiled. God has been faithful to them and we are the recipients of their faithfulness.

My family is comprised of individuals in diverse occupations. We are clergy, educators, and athletes. We are farmers, brick masons, and mechanics. We are doctors, lawyers, gospel singers, and musicians. We are a proud generation. We appreciate the foundation laid by our forefathers and we will press forward until our work is done. We will build upon the great legacy we inherited. We are committed to leaving a legacy of faithfulness to God and love of family.

My earliest and first God encounter came in 1972 at age ten. I was stricken with Rheumatic Fever while attending elementary school. During this time, many children stricken with this illness were dying. A month was spent in Tuomey Hospital, in Sumter,

South Carolina. Following my stay at Tuomey, I was transferred to a convalescence home in Florence, South Carolina. Six months were spent quarantine from family and friends in the convalescence home. Upon my release, I spent another six months at home recuperating. During this time, my faith was developed and strengthened. Faith moved from what I learned about in Sunday school and church to what I practiced during my recovery. When confronted by the certainty of death, one has nothing but their faith. I understood more and more about Paul's declaration, "Faith being the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things to come." No one really expected me to survive. My attending physician came into to my room during those six months every morning surprised to find that I had made it through the night. There were others who were diagnosed with the same conditioned who died during the time I was in the hospital. God demonstrated grace and mercy in my life.

While my attending physician was surprised daily by me clinging to life, an attempt was made to encourage me. The attending physician made a promise to me, that if I got well enough to go home, he would purchase me a rabbit. This encouraged and developed within the will of my young soul to fight each day to live. Each day I was determined to make it through the day and to survive the night. Through God graciousness and my will to live, I left the hospital with two rabbits. Some forty-two years later, I am still here. God sustained me through this trying period in my life. Not only did God sustain me, God provided for my parents as well. The presence and power of God would become foundational for other experiences to come in my life.

I can only imagine what my parents must have gone through while I struggled to live. Given my condition of rheumatic fever and children dying daily of this condition,

my parents faced every day with the possibility it could be my last. Being quarantine, they could not touch me and I could not touch them. When they came to visit, they prayed for me at their arrival and when they departed. For six months, they endured this illness with me, praying and worrying if the phone would ring. After six months of quarantine, six months of praying, and six months of having my faith developed, I was released to go home. The cloud of death had been removed. But this would not be the last encounter with death or with the graciousness of God.

In a fallen world children face death from rheumatic fever and in a fallen world there is unexplained death. As my health improved through elementary and middle school years, another crisis was looming as I entered high school. My third oldest brother left home to live in Tampa, Florida in March 1978. Two months after his arrival in Florida, an unknown assailant killed him. While the phone never rang during my illness, my brother, healthy, vibrant, full of energy and enthusiasm was killed. Daily, my parents faced the possibility of my death because of illness. I do not think they could have imagined a phone call telling them their son, my brother was dead. This was my first experience with death and mortality.

My high school experience was all that I imagined and more. As the youngest, I was privileged with more than my older siblings. Given we were under privileged, my older siblings decided to leave school to work in the fields. They were not required by our parents to work; yet they sought to help the family. Only the last four of the thirteen siblings completed high school. I did not participate in sports. I sang in the school performance choir. I was also fortunate to drive the district school bus from the ninth grade to the twelfth grade. Daily, my route covered thirty-two miles one way, picking up

students for three schools. Due to health issues, I was not fortunate to participate in athletics, although my peers voted me most popular.

Two years after the death of my older brother Robert, in 1980 and one year prior to my graduation, my father suffered a serious stroke. As a result of the stroke, my father spent three months in the hospital. My brother's death was instant. My family was reliving the six months I spent in the hospital. I was reliving my time facing death. My father would eventually die from the strokes he suffered. This would be a devastating blow in my life. I was the youngest, and relied on my father and now he was dead. Again, our family found sustaining power in our relationship with God. God had provided through my illness. God had strengthened us in the death of my brother. God would strengthen us in this moment. Remembering the teachings of my father, "I cried unto the Lord. God heard my cries and God had mercy on me and my family."

Throughout my life there was always the strong presence of God in the life of my family. God sustained me through my illness to prepare me to do a greater work for Him. Two months after my father passed, the greater plan of God was beginning to materialize. I awoken from my sleep one morning with a strong urgency to proclaim God's Holy word. My spirit was in turmoil. God was calling me to preach the gospel. My older brother Abraham had already accepted the call and was serving as pastor of the St. John AME Church in Long, South Carolina. I went to my mother crying profusely and praising God concerning my call. I knelt before her and placed my head in her lap trying over and over to explain how I was feeling. While my mother could not fully understand what was going on with me, she sent me to Abraham.

Abraham heard my heart as I shared the call to ministry. He understood what was going on within me and was able to help me to understand the strange feeling as well as the call. On October 30, 1980, I was given the opportunity to preach my initial sermon entitled "Lord Did You Call Me." The Reverend James Washington, the pastor at Beulah African Methodist Episcopal Church assisted me in preparing my initial message. In 1981, with the blessing of the Board of Stewards, I was licensed to preach at the Quarterly Conference held at Beulah African Methodist Episcopal Church and one year later admitted to the Northeast South Carolina conference. The Board of Stewards prayed with me and for me. Their encouragement and prayers prepared me to go forward in ministry. I still thank God today for the prayers and the spirit of the Board of Steward. They have invaluable influence on my ministry and the minister I am becoming.

Upon graduating from high school in 1981, I enrolled and attend Morris College, Sumter, South Carolina. While I had accepted the call to preach the gospel, there was still a lot of uncertainty due to my human frailty and bad judgment. Two years prior to graduation at Morris, a friend introduced me to a young lady. Our relationship would subsequently produce a child outside of marriage. My parents taught me to be responsible in my relationships. More specifically, they advised to abstain from pre-marital sexual relationships. I had violated their teachings. Therefore I felt it necessary to do the right thing and marry her. Therefore, the two of us spent extensive time discussing our future and the future of our forthcoming child. We decided to get married on March 28th, 1986. I dropped out of college and took a job to provide for my family.

Not only did the pregnancy affect my college career, there was also a negative impact on my ministry. The pregnancy occurred while I served as pastor of Friendship

and Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Churches in Marion South Carolina. In the Methodist tradition, I served the church as an Itinerant Deacon. This title allowed me to serve in the capacity of the pastor. The only restriction was I could not consecrate the elements for the Lord's Supper. To fully serve in the context of pastor without restriction, I needed to be elected and ordained as an Itinerant Elder. The requirement is to have a Master of Divinity Degree from an accredited seminary. By dropping out of school and marrying prevented the normal process of ordination. Given I was serving as pastor; the special missionary rules were invoked to secure my ordination. This rule was executed due to a need for a pastor in a particular area. Special consideration was also given to the continuing education courses completed. The first time in forty-years, this rule was executed.

There was a constant struggle to pastor, work and maintain the marriage. The pregnancy was the wrong reason to get married and it was beginning to manifest in our relationship. Finally after three years of marriage, I came home to find a note indicating she did not want to be married. I felt numb and lost for words. She and our son had moved to her parents. In an effort to save the marriage, we received counsel from the Presiding Elder. Further we also received counseling from the Presiding Bishop. During one of our appointments, my wife indicated to the Presiding Bishop the marriage was over. After counseling proved to be futile, the divorce was finalized August 1991. It was the worst experience I had ever encountered. While the divorce was proceeding, I returned to further my education at Allen University, Columbia, South Carolina.

Now serving the church as an Itinerant Deacon, Presiding Elder Mingo Singleton became my spiritual father. He took me under his wings. Through his mentorship, my

knowledge of the AME Church increased. He took me to meetings, which I would have been unable to attend because of financial constraints. I was able to attend connectional, state, district and local meetings because of my relationship with Presiding Elder Singleton. Our relationship developed and matured to the place where he would introduce me as his son. I drove him to meetings and he deposited invaluable information about the church, spirituality, church growth, development, and Church polity. A debt of gratitude is owed for his leadership and presence in my life.

In 1986, another tragic event would occur in my life. I dealt with my personal illness with rheumatic fever, the death of my brother and father. I would again come face to face with death and the reality of faith in my life. I was involved in a horrific automobile accident, which could have taken my life. However, God was gracious and spared me. An eighteen-wheeler hit me from the rear. Both my car and the eighteen-wheel tractor-trailer went off the embankment. When both vehicles came to rest, the eighteen-wheel tractor-trailer rested upon my vehicle.

When the ambulance and fire crew arrived, the assumption was I did not survive the crash. Their work initially was on the driver of the eighteen-wheel tractor-trailer who subsequently died. While they were working for his rescue, a classmate had arrived who noticed I was alive. The attention shifted to my extraction.

As with my experience with rheumatic fever, the doctor being surprised daily by my survival through the night. The insurance adjuster who reviewed my car could not believe I had survived the accident. The insurance adjuster commented that he did not expect to be talking to me about the accident. He figured that I died because in his own words, there was no way that I could have survived an accident of that magnitude. God

had proven again to be faithful. God healed me when I was sick and was expected to die. God had sustained me through the death of my brother and father. God kept me through the breakup of my marriage and the subsequent divorce. Now God had saved me from certain death by accident.

God has allowed and blessed me to serve thirty-four years as of October 11, 2013. I have been blessed to serve as pastor of nine South Carolina African Methodist Episcopal Churches—Reid Chapel, Sumter, Tabernacle, Friendship, Gresham, Ebenezer, Mayesville, Salem, Bucksport, Weston Chapel, Latta, Bethel, Darlington, Greater Goodwill, Mount Pleasant, and currently the Pastor of Greater St. Luke, Charleston. Upon my arrival at each pastorate, I assessed the needs of the congregation and the community. Each congregation presented a new challenge and opportunity for growth. Serving as pastor of a rural church and serving an urban church are different. With each appointment I had to make the adjustment to the people and to the community.

My first pastorate was Reid Chapel, Sumter. This church was a mission church. Services were held in the evenings at 4:00 p.m. The hope was the community would fellowship with the church. Although the church was small in membership, it was a vital part of the community. We provided clothing. We provided gas and kerosene assistance to families during the winter. The church saw a need and provide for the community.

Tabernacle and Friendship were rural circuit churches where I provided services every other Sunday. I serve Friendship on the first and third Sundays. I served Tabernacle on the second and fourth Sundays. Both churches were supported by an established crises center. The crisis center was essential to the community providing necessary assistance in the time of need.

Reid Chapel, Tabernacle, and Friendship provided my first working relationship between the community and the church. These churches also provide a practical relationship with the polity of the AME church. Each church struggled to meet their financial commitment to the connectional church. However, they were committed to addressing the needs of the community.

I arrived at Ebenezer, Mayesville, South Carolina in 1988. The church was just completing a major renovation. The church was ready for ministries and growth. I had come to the place where I was born. I began to work with enthusiasm and confidence because of our previous relationship. I knew the people and they knew me. Under my leadership, the male choir and a contemporary choir of young adults were established. Through our youth ministries, a drama ministry and junior officers were organized. In 1989, the devastation of hurricane Hugo hit the rural area with much destruction. The community of Mayesville was ravaged by the storm. Many of the congregants had their homes and vehicles destroyed. While Reid Chapel, Tabernacle and Friendship provided ministry out of concern, Ebenezer was being called to provide ministry out of suffering and need. This would be ministry to those within and outside the congregation. The impact of the storm affected the congregation and more importantly it was a lesson to be learned for me as pastor. This storm taught me the first real lesson on community outreach.

Mayesville from its existence was divided into two sections, one African American, and one section white. The Civil Rights Movement, the integration of the school systems and changing culture within the larger context of American had not changed the racial segregation of Mayesville. What laws and legislation could not do,

what the passage of time did not do; a storm did. Hurricane Hugo created an environment of cooperation between the races. There was devastation in the white community, there was destruction in the Black community and healing and help was needed in both communities. Ebenezer became a temporary housing location and distribution center for the town of Mayesville. Our job was to ensure that every family was safe until their home was repaired or replaced.

The temporary housing was part of a larger work the church was engaged. We were in dialogue with city, state, and federal officials concerning the work needed in our community. The information flow was critical to providing the services. We were in constant dialogue with FEMA, the Department of Social Services, and state officials. To ensure the community was being restored, cleanup groups were organized. Groups were organized to assist with providing transportation for the elderly to get to town, to pick up medication and for doctor and dental appointments. The work of Ebenezer in the midst of a crisis was rewarded. People in the community saw the church in action. Many in the community became members of the church.

In the tradition of the Methodist church, I was given an appointment to Salem AME Church in Bucksport, South Carolina in 1991. Bucksport is a rural congregation outside of Conway, South Carolina. Upon my arrival at Salem, the people had a mind to work within the community. The community was small and most of the residents were members of the church. In addition to my community focus, I began to put emphasis on the internal administration of the church. I organized the church calendar, budget, vision, and administrative staff. There were community concerns, which demanded my attention. It was discovered that the crime rate in the area was increasing at a rapid rate due to

unemployment and high school dropouts. Together along with my church, the community, and the local law enforcement team, we established the first Neighborhood Crime Watch. We also organized a Thursday Family night to promote stronger family units. These nights included Bible study, bon fires, s'mores and discussion of basic family issues around the table. A youth Church school class was also established and ministries birthed. There was also an effort amongst clergy to come together in unity. Therefore the Bucksport Ministerial Alliance was formed.

There was another conference and I was given another appointment to Weston Chapel in Latta, South Carolina in 1995. Weston Chapel modeled my personal life. It was another test. I followed a pastor who died while serving the church. He served for twelve years. Under his leadership, the church had completed a building project. The church was without a full time pastor for one year. I entered the pastorate with complete confidence God would look favorably upon the people. There were many wounds, which needed to be healed. I had prayed God would grow and strength the church. The Lord heard and answered my prayers. The church began to grow. We began to strength family connections. We reorganized the Women's Missionary Society. Workshops on Robert's Rules of Order were held. The Young People's Department was revitalized. A youth choir and acolytes ministry was established. A van was purchased. Outreach ministries were established in collaboration with the Department of Social Services. However, through the church a Health and Wellness Ministry was established in order to assist our seniors with the purchasing of medication and the partial purchase of eye care wear. We participated in the Angel Tree Prison Ministry, and Thanksgiving and Christmas allowed us to serve families by providing gift baskets or gift cards to families who were in need.

Throughout my life and in ministry there were challenges to face. While the ministry was developing and God was answering prayers in relationship to the ministry, there was another crisis in my family. Our fourth child was born January 1, 2002. On initial examination everything looked normal. However time would prove differently. Upon further examination, it was discovered the baby had an obstruction of the lower intestine. The child was born at McLeod Medical Regional Hospital in Florence, South Carolina. The hospital however was not equipped to provide the medical attention my son needed. The child was transferred to the Medical University of South Carolina. While having birthed two previous children, the condition of this child caused her to be distraught. As a pastor, I had counseled others through their crisis. Now I was being challenge to counsel my wife and understand why my child would be born with this condition. God would prove to be faithful. Kim and I struggled through his sickness while remaining faithful to God. God was gracious and Jovonte is alive today.

There was another challenge, and another opportunity for God to demonstrate faithfulness to our family. The birth of my son caused me to reflect upon my personal life. Rheumatic fever almost took my life. Now an anomaly, an event outside of the norm had the possibility of taking my son's life. The same God, who was with me in my crisis, was the same God who helped through the death of my brother and father. The same God who preserved my life in the accident is the same God who saved the life of my son. These moments, these experiences with God demonstrate to me over and over that God is real.

In 2003, I was appointed as pastor of Bethel in Darlington, South Carolina. This church was fractured because of poor administrative practices. There were two factions,

equally split within the church. The focus of the ministry would be internal. Through demonstrating and teaching love and care, the membership was healed. They were fully aware of the issues, which needed to be addressed and fully participated in the healing of the church. As the people within the church were healed, as the administrative practices were corrected, ministries began to be birth. We were healing on the inside; therefore we turned our focus outward. We began to seek out those in the community who needed to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. We provided ministry: feeding the hungry, a food bank ministry through Harvest Ministries. We were a social gospel church.

During my tenure at Bethel, my son Clayton had his first in a series of runs-ins with law enforcement. He was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute. This was a hurtful experience for me. I knew that I had done right by him as a father. Even though he was an adult, we grieve because of the choice he made. In the midst of our crisis, my mother was the calming voice of reason and rationality. While others provide counsel from their emotions, she provided counsel from her wisdom. She reminded me that we could not live our children's lives. My son was responsible for his situation and it was my son who would ultimately have to answer for the choices he made.

In 2006, one half of my theological degree was completed. I was sent once again to go where the needs of the people were the greatest. Only this time it meant being removed from familiar surroundings. It meant moving two hours away from home and resigning from my full time employment as a Service Coordinator for the Department of Disability and Special Needs. I had served in this position for fifteen years. I was being sent to serve as pastor of Greater Goodwill in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. Moving to

Mt. Pleasant meant the family would have to relocate and the children were placed in new schools.

The membership of Greater Goodwill was larger than any that I had previously pastored and along with the promotion came a great deal of responsibilities. The church was in the early stages of a 2.5 million dollars family life center project with only the foundation being laid. The church came with a daycare also. At Mt. Pleasant, the church was divided; some people wanted the new life center while others did not.

My administrative duties required me to restructure all the boards of the church including the daycare. During the restructuring of the church, the devil slipped in once again. Our son Justin while in middle school got angry with some students and prepared what they called a hit list. Prior to this in 2007, while attending the Missionary Quadrennial, my mother in law called to inform us that my father in law was hospitalized and was being prepared to be flown to a hospital out of town due to a massive stroke; in July, he passed away. One month after the burial of my father in law, my youngest sister Marie became ill and died suddenly. The toll of those two deaths rested as a heavy burden upon me and other family members. Again I found myself taking the same medicine that I administered to other families.

My son (Justin) meanwhile was expelled from school; we were given no hope and were told by the board that he was being sent to a behavioral school for the remainder of the school year. But thank God for a ninety-year old minister by the name of the Reverend Victoria Washington who took us under her wings when we arrived at Greater Goodwill. She ministered to our family. Justin entered school the following year played football (started) during his high school tenure and graduated high school.

The building project was completed, and ministries were birthed. The youth choir was reestablished and a praise dance ministry was birthed. The church day care center was restructured and a governing board was appointed. Outreach ministries were done mostly through the Missionary Society and a Prison Ministry was birthed. A Greif and Condolences Ministry and the NICU Ministry for babies born to families prematurely or those born under normal circumstance were also established. Outreach was done as much as possible, but due to the high mortgage and other expenses, our outreach included only workshops and a food pantry. I was able to acquire during my administration two loan modifications, which greatly reduce the interest and mortgage rate.

In 2011, the call again was made, whom shall we send and who will go. At Greater Saint Luke, Charleston, my current pastorate was a situation very similar to what I found at Bethel Darlington. There were over 2,000 members on the roll but only sixty-eight were actively attending. The people were scattered. I made an appeal for the membership to return. Slowly members started returning. The membership has grown from the initial sixty-eight in 2011 to around 675 members. The new crowd consists of old members and new converts. God has given the increase.

As the church grew, the ministry had to come alongside. New ministry had to be developing or revitalized. Youth ministry had to be revitalized. My daughter (only) was very active in the youth organizations of the church and approached me first about what I was going to do. To address the concern of my daughter which reflected the greater concern of others, I set in motion plans to restore the youth organizations of the church. The church school youth classes were reorganized along with an addition reaching the childbearing parents age twenty-five to fifty. The youth choir was reorganized, and along

with it came the dance and mime ministry. A birthday/anniversary committee was established and a Second Sunday Breakfast Fellowship sponsored by various organizations of the church. An annual fun day and an annual appreciation banquet were established. At the banquet, a member from each organization is recognized for the hard work. A drama ministry was birthed and through this ministry we had an opportunity to witness the birth and death of Jesus, the prodigal son and others.

This November, I will complete my second year at Greater Saint Luke; we have done much to bring the church up to date and conducive for service. We have added monitors to the sanctuary to improve the viewing of all; we have an audio/video ministry and have purchased new video recording equipment. We have improved the outside of the church removing trees and vines for safety reasons and added outside security cameras for the safety of our Administrative Assistant and for the safety of all who visit the church and an automatic door release. The church continues to grow as we fellowship and praise God for the work that He is doing in the life of the church. Families are being strengthened, and the community has once again begun to fellowship with us. We have programs in place to assist families in distress and to direct them/or assist them in long term assistance. To God be the glory!

In May 2013, my mother (92 years old) passed away. The death of my mother has taken a wrenching toll on my heart. As she lived, she died, without suffering or prolonged sickness. In her right mind, with the same amount of dignity and respect that she prided and carried herself as long as I knew her as mama. But unto to Him who is able, I give reverence.

During my early ministry, my ambition/goal was to have the largest church/church membership. I could not understand why I had to start from a mission church with no members, where I could only have service in the evening and my salary came from my mother who impromptu served as an unofficial class leader and collected donations from my siblings to help support my ministry.

Entering the ministry at a young age, I thought that I would immediately go to the top of the church, but through my tenure, I have learned that my greatest teaching and development of my ministry began at those pulpits found in the rural areas of humble beginnings. Starting there allowed me more time to commune with God and not be puffed up. They taught life lessons of sacrifice and self-sufficiency, they helped to strengthen my faith and redefine my calling.

The larger the church appointment, the more political the context became. It was at this point in my ministry that I utilized much of what I learned earlier in my ministry, which has strengthen me through pastoral training, workshops and continued education.

Today, a pivotal turn is taking place, as I desire to become a doctor of the church, attending to the total congregation through an inclusive ministry that has something for everyone. My new ministry outside the walls of the church will include a variety of services, which will address job loss, poor health care, and the lack of education.

My inclusive ministry will involve and encourage education as a result of academics, as I educate my congregation on the needs of our church families and community. In growing my church without walls, I will provide information about the most needed areas of service, and guide the actions of the members so that they will become informed about the needs of the people at home and abroad. We will educate

ourselves regarding horrible tragic conditions of poverty in our community first, then in the country, and other countries. Through workshops and presentations affecting our lives, we will develop/establish self-help ministries to promote a wealth of self-help opportunities in preparing the new church to be self-sufficient in the 21st century.

My personal and church life has been one of healing and deliverance. From my experiences with rheumatic fever, to healing of my child, to the healing of the congregations I have pastored, God has demonstrated over and over to be a healer. God has been faithful to the prayers of my ancestors. As this journey continues and expands to a new destination, I look forward to how God will use me in the future. These experiences will not be without merit and value.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

In a course of study on “Growing a Church without Walls,” my attention was captured and offered a challenge on the context. I have pastored the Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Wagner Jewish community in the Holy City of Charleston, South Carolina from November 8, 2011 to the present. The church site is an old Jewish community, which is now membered by African-Americans and Caucasians. The community is well kept and groomed, offering a friendly invitation to those feeling a desire to live in an ecumenical community.

The concern faced in the context is that the church is fulfilling its mission quite well within the confinement of its sacred walls, but fails to reach beyond the visible walls of the church. We are well trained in the areas of stewardship, discipleship, and evangelism. Our church must become as the church in the book of Acts—beginning on the day of Pentecost. This described how Christ through the Spirit of God tended, controlled, and empowered the expansion of the church. The church’s primary purpose is to glorify its head, Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone, which purchased the church with His own blood.

In the book of Acts 2:47, the Church was born on the day of Pentecost when three thousand souls were saved and added to the Church.¹ The book of Acts is where we find Jesus' very first words spoken to His disciples "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus spent a great deal of time training His followers on how to be "His disciples!" He taught them how to bring people to "new life" in Christ Jesus. He promised that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them, and that they would be His witnesses.

Discipleship is Jesus' highest priority for every believer. When Jesus ascended to heaven, the job of making disciples was left in the hands of His followers; He gave them the Holy Spirit as promised, to empower their disciple making efforts.

The Church needs to be revived and have its true meaning reiterated. The mission, vision, purpose, and objectives of the African Methodist Episcopal Church are as follows:

1. The Mission – The Mission of the AME Church is to minister to social, spiritual, and physical development of all people.
2. The Vision – At every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is to seek out and save the lost, and to serve the needy. It is also the duty of the Church to continue to encourage all members to become involved in all aspects of church training.
3. The Purposes – The ultimate purposes are: 1) make available God's biblical principles, 2) spread Christ's liberating gospel, and 3) provide continuing programs which will enhance the entire social development of all people.
4. The Objectives – In order to meet the needs at every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall implement strategies to train all members in 1) Christian discipleship, 2) Christian leadership, 3) current teaching methods and materials, 4) the history and significance of the AME

¹ Acts 2:47, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this document are from the NRSV.

Church, 5) God's biblical principles, and 6) social development to which all should be applied to daily living.²

There is a great need for our church to reach beyond its walls and boundaries and spill over into all the world. This includes ministering to the total church; the physical, spiritual, mental, and environmental needs of the community. This will allow the congregation an opportunity to reach beyond its walls to address the needs of those who are not connected to the traditional Sunday morning fellowship, thus making us accountable and proving that we are good neighbors through the commandment of God that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. Therefore, the process will also include assessing the needs of the community by offering seminars that will enhance unity among the church and the community, and showing that the church is the community.

Therefore, two passages have been chosen to develop a foundation to strengthen the areas of leadership and discipleship at the Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church in order to move safely from within the traditional realm to an ecumenical fellowship.

In Exodus 18:13-27, Moses is now appointed to serve as Israel's judge to keep order in the lives of the people he led out of Egypt. They were experiencing difficulties in understanding the Ten Commandments and following Moses' leadership. He was now trying to make known the previous laws of God.

The Israelites were having difficulties in understanding the laws of God and requested the ordinance of God from Moses. Moses must teach them the laws of God. Once the law is taught and understood, Israel would be in position to grow as God intended. The Israelites often would get in quarrelsome issues and would rely on Moses

² Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church 76th Anniversary Booklet, May 16, 1954, Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church Committee.

to execute the law according to the nature of the allegations. This task after a period of time overwhelmed Moses and affected his life greatly. The frequency of the occurring issues continued to wear upon the conscience of Moses. Moses was overwhelmed with complaints from the people and could not keep up with the registered complaints and concerns.

As his father-in-law Jethro observed his son-in-law struggling, he said to him, if you want to lead the people successfully, you must develop a more comprehensive and systematic way to do so. Jethro told Moses the way you are handling matters would eventually wear you down. Why not develop a system that would allow you to identify capable men whom are well trained, and assign them over the areas that involves the least intrusive matters so that you would then be available to handle matters that are intrusive or major. This would allow Moses to adequately serve and lead the people to the land that was promised to them.

Moses had men standing around day and evening with nothing to do, now through organization and training, these men were able to serve as judges and promote growth. Through the organization and delegation of authority, Moses' administration as leader and judge was successful.

The book of Exodus provides several models of servant leadership and responsibility sharing. A very familiar example is that of Moses' experience leading the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. During this time in Moses' ministry, the overbearing responsibility of leadership hindered him from getting much accomplished. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, upon visiting the camp, witnessed just how time-consuming it was to sit and listen to the complaints and the concerns of the people. Jethro admonished

Moses saying that it was not right for him to be shouldering the entire burden of leadership while there were other capable, honest and godly men in the area. Jethro's advice to Moses was that he find men who would not take bribes and to commission them as judges. He recommended that each judge preside over an even number of people. Jethro's plan included a breakdown of judges who would adequately listen to the situations and the concerns of the people. Jethro, making sure that the direst concerns were taken care of appropriately, suggested that anything too complex for the assigned judges would be brought to Moses so that he could deal with them personally. Jethro warned Moses that to try to do everything himself was not right, and would certainly wear him out over time. "For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone" (Ex 18:18b). Jethro was genuinely concerned that the job was too heavy a burden for one person and believed that there was an easier way to deal with the problems that developed in the community. Jethro was trying to convince Moses that the burden of responsibility was not solely his responsibility and that the responsibility should be shared with the people he was charged to lead.

Jethro's plan was based on the premise that there were others among the community who could help him lead. The plan would accomplish two very important tasks. It would identify those among the community who had been empowered to lead and it would provide a mechanism that ensured everyone adequate attention and a more realistic possibility that their needs would be met. Probably the most important benefit realized through this system was that it enabled Moses to focus his time on becoming a more efficient leader. This biblical model is a plan that would lessen the leadership

burden by “Empowering God’s People for Service and Leadership Through Divine Vision.”

In his book, *The Disciple-Making Church*, Bill Hull emphasizes the importance of disciple making. Hull emphatically points out that the making of disciples is a critical mission for the church and should be understood as a primary responsibility for every Christian. I agree completely with Hull’s position that the Great Commission charging us to make disciples should be the central focus of the church’s mission and ministry. The author asserts that, “Unless the church makes making disciples its main agenda, world evangelism is a fantasy. There is no way to reproduce, multiply, and decentralize people and the Gospel without first diligently making disciples. The way we have proceeded has not produced the quality of people or the number of people to perform what Christ commanded.”³

In Exodus 18:20, Moses identified the problem of trying to lead a group of people without proper organization and instructions. The solution to his problem was to make everyone aware of the decrees and laws. They must be taught the laws of God and what God requires of them in their walk with Him. Moses also encouraged them to do a good work that would be accepted by God. It is my duty as the Pastor of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church to provide instructions and teachings to my congregants on the laws of God, and the laws of the church. The laws of God if taught to the people would indeed enhance them to do a better work for the kingdom of God.

In 2 Chronicles 19:10, King Jehoshaphat the king of Judea was experiencing issues similar to that of Moses. He appointed judges throughout all Judah, city after city.

³ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 10.

They were appointed to judge, but most of all, they were appointed to teach the people how to reverence and fear God. If the teaching was to be effective and sound, those who were carriers of the word must show some allegiance to God.

According to Exodus 18:21, Moses father-in-law offers some advice to him as it relates to the selecting of able men that were capable, having the fear of God and full of truth; men who refused to do things that were unjust and not of God. These men of honor were to be placed in various sections to govern and rule the people under their leadership. The Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church uses the Class Leader system to allow the church to be placed in groups to better serve and keep the ordinances of God and to perfect the way discipleship is to be taught and carried out to its fullest. They must have a discerning heart for leadership and discipleship.

For several years, I have asked the church to behave like a family in love and demonstrate love for others. As a matter of fact, some of the people who have been drawn to Greater St Luke tell me they have been drawn to this church because they liked the family feel and the love we have started to share with one another. It is clearly understood that God will certainly require more of us in the coming years. It will be imperative for us to refocus our energy as we look to the not so distant future of our church and surrounding community. When addressing the congregation and the people who live in and around our community, we must consider a biblical and theological approach to revival and renewal. We must work to overcome the prevailing atmosphere of economic and moral hopelessness. “We Shall Overcome”⁴ must once again become not only our mantra but our collective mindset.

⁴ Charles Tindley, *We Shall Overcome Someday* (Nashville, TN: AMEC Hymnal, 1998).

James H. Cone is an African Methodist Episcopal theologian and author of several books that highlight what is referred to as the liberation theology imperative. This notion is based on the historical plight of the African American people and the liberation theme that runs through the entire Bible. “Deep in my heart, I do believe that we shall overcome someday.”⁵

Theologians and biblical scholars have highlighted the fact that God’s initial relationship with Israel was one of liberator. The same God who liberated Israel is the same liberating God of the Exodus. Black liberation theology is a Christian theology of liberation. James and Cecil Cone and other scholars who have contributed a great deal of work to this field have provided much encouragement to people in our community by pointing to God as the liberator of the oppressed. “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go’ (Ex 5:1a), is indicative of the school of liberation theology that focuses on the Lord not only as our redeemer but also as the liberator of the oppressed.

As we work to revive hope in our church, our congregation and in our community, the class leader can draw a page from James Cone’s aptly titled book, *My Soul Looks Back*. The title is actually a line taken from Clara Ward’s recording of the very popular, inspirational gospel song, “How I Got Over.”⁶ The book like the recording points to the church community as the bedrock of faith. The church was the gathering place. Even before the large beautiful edifices that we are so blessed to worship in today, African American Christians gathered under brush arbors praying, singing and testifying.

⁵ Charles Tindley, *We Shall Overcome Someday* (Nashville, TN: AMEC Hymnal, 1998).

⁶ Willa Royster-Ward, *How I Got Over: Clara Ward and the World-Famous Ward Singers* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1997).

The personal testimony was evidence that the Lord is still liberating the oppressed. The group leaders served as “living testimonies” that if God can work it out for me, he can work it out for anybody. Whether the oppression was real or perceived, class leaders pointed people to Jesus and promised, by faith, the Lord was still able and the Lord was still available to all that would call on him.

Leadership calls for persons who are able and truthful in spreading and evangelizing the word of God. Leaders of the twenty first century should seek men as Moses did, men who will speak volumes to those who have been empowered to lead and encourage others to become disciples. Leaders must keep in mind that delegation fails if the assignment is not placed into the hands of Godly and capable men.

The Bible gives examples of leaders being led by God to gather the people to disseminate pertinent information. In Leviticus 8:1, we find, “The Lord spoke to Moses” and in the third verse God tells Moses, “Assemble the whole congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” Moses did as the Lord commanded and assembled the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting. In the fifth chapter we read, Moses addressed the congregation: “This is what GOD has commanded to be done.”

Just as in the day of Moses, much of what is passed between “leadership” and “followship” is done so orally, through the work of messengers set aside for that specific purpose. “And the Lord gave me two stone tablets written with the finger of God; on them were all the words that the Lord had spoken to you at the mountain out of the fire on the day of the assembly” (Dt 9:10).

From the system’s inception, much of what the class leader did was a great help to the membership. In the days of limited communication, it was extremely necessary to

oversee the health and financial situations particularly in the homes of the less fortunate. The class leader's assistance and diligence could in many instances save lives and property. It goes without saying that one very important task the class leader performed was keeping a watchful eye on giving.

As compared to Matthew 28:18-20, the narrative is similar to that which is recorded in the book of Exodus 18:13-28. The Great Commission is where Christ is giving authority to eleven ordinary Galilean men to transition from the visible church to the ecumenical church. Christ, the Chief Cornerstone of the church now repositioned the church to an area of service to all humankind. Christ is saying that he did not usurp His authority when He went through the cross experience and after the resurrection, He announced that all power was given to Him on earth and in heaven. This power was given directly by His Father God from heaven.

He then gave an assignment to the appointed Apostles—to minister to all the nation, to all humankind the living Word of God. Go and spread the Gospel to all who will receive it. They were to make themselves available to bring light in to areas of darkness and growth in remote areas. They were to make the teaching of salvation available to all who were willing to receive it. Now those who were instructed were to authenticate their commitment through baptism and the washing of water, which offered identification with the Lord. They must be made aware of the experience they had received and were encouraged to investigate the matter and not take them lightly nor for granted, but by the authority of the Father, Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Christian faith is built upon the Great Commission which ushers the believers into the presence of God.

Matthew 28:18-20 is the fullest record we have of the teaching of Jesus Christ, the incomparable record of the most sacred teacher on earth utilizing His wisdom and knowledge, He encouraged others to become disciples. Jesus like Moses realized that in order to enlarge and perfect our areas of growth and service, we must invite and train. Having been resurrected as the first from the dead, Jesus meet with his disciples on a hill in Galilee.

Jesus now informs them that all power to rule with authority was given to Him in heaven and in the earth. Once authority is given, one can develop a model of teaching and direction for those who are to be leaders and teachers. Moses taught men that were God fearing, faithful, and who hated unjust gain to assist him as judge.

As pastor of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Presiding Bishop appointment authorize and gives me the authority to execute the laws of the church and the scriptures. I am given the authority to perform the work of the church and of the community. Jesus gave the disciples strict orders that would enlarge and impact His kingdom. The authority Moses gave to the judges brought balance and validation as they utilized their authority in teaching the decrees and the law of God.

In Matthew 20:19, Jesus reminds the disciples that absolute power and authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. Therefore, the disciples were to go and make disciples of all nations. Not only did Christ command them to go, but He encouraged them as well. The disciples were to preach the Gospel that others might become learners and followers of Jesus Christ. They were to utilize the commandment and not limit the word of the commandment go. Previously they were limited and could not go near the gentile village. This commandment suspended the covenant made with

the Jews. The new commandment sends them into all the nations to do the work of an evangelist, spreading the Good News about Jesus. They now must be baptized indicating that they have been identified with Christ in His suffering, death, burial, and resurrection; moreover to be identified with other Christians and faith-based communities.

After baptism, teaching should take place; they must be taught as Moses instructed his judges in how to handle the issues of his people by teaching them to observe all things go beyond evangelism. Making converts and disciples is not sufficient for them. Now, believers must be taught to obey the teaching and commandment of Christ as they become like Him.

In Exodus 18:13-27, Moses's father-in-law offered him a recommendation to organized men to assist him. There a similar message is found in Matthew 28:18-20 where Christ empowered eleven ordinary Galilean men to the charge of empowerment and enlarging the Kingdom of God through Discipleship.

Discipleship is modeling and teaching the basic principles on how to become a Christian and reaching out and spreading the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Discipleship means demonstrating the Christ-like love for those who lost their sense of being by taking the message of hope to all and rejoicing when one has received the plan of salvation through the teaching of the Word.

There are occasions in the Old Testament, which speak to the concerns/issues that I am facing. It speaks to how God used men to validate its true meaning. These men obeyed the directions of God and were successful at the end. So, it is now, through this teaching that we are privileged to so much teaching and materials that will offer positive changes in our communities as well as our church. This will begin the process of

converting the visible church to the invisible church (community) to becoming one—a vibrant strong church without walls.

This research has led me into looking at the Old Testament, which offers a narrative story. The text comes from the book of Exodus 18:13-26 (NIV).

The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.” Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.” Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

Israel is a product of the Sinaitic experience, which began when God called the renegade Moses to Egypt where he delivered His people out of the hands of Pharaoh. Moving from Goshen in Egypt through God’s leadership, Moses is commissioned to safely lead God’s people to a better tomorrow. Moving across the Red Sea to the Sinai Peninsula, the Hebrews at Sinai satisfied a covenant with God Yahweh (Ex 24) in spite of the many plagues and the frequent change of Pharaoh’s mind. However, due to a series of disobedience, God’s judgment fell upon them causing added years to their struggle.

The world in which we live portrays a similar ordeal. We as a race were brought to America to be sold to the highest bidder, however, as the Israelites, we received a form of freedom, and too often we forget the ones whom delivered us.

Jethro, Moses father-in-law received the report that God had blessed Moses as he lead the Israelites safely out of the land of Egypt. The struggles in the wilderness illustrate that all men will struggle in life. This struggle authenticates that there is a meaning and a purpose. The journey in the desert was a pilgrimage with a divine direction. God was a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Ex 13:21).

Israel now must trust God for their protection. Although danger encamped them along with thirst and hunger, God continued to test them to see if the Jews could live under such faith, which can give spiritual significance to their historical journey. As the priest observed Moses being fatigued and burnt out, the priest realized that Moses was suffering from the struggling leader syndrome. John Maxwell in his book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* would identify Moses' plight to law number ten, "The Law of Connection." While working with people, you must have a heart for the people you are leading. If a leader is to be effective, then they must express the desire and stamina to connect. As a leader, one must recognize that you will not be able to move people to action unless you first move them with emotion. We must connect with others in order to get a quality outcome. The greater the relationship you have with the people the greater your outcome will be.⁷

Then the priest spoke to Moses, he said, "My wife has two sons and I heard that God has truly and graciously blessed you and the Israelites." Moses then shared his story

⁷ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 113.

with the priest of how God had delivered the Israelites and defeated Pharaoh and his army, this news was startling to the imagination of Jethro. Jethro was led to offer blessings to God for taking the Israelites from the hands of Pharaoh. He also felt compelled to exalt the name of the Lord and recognize His power and authority over all other gods.

Jethro wanted to honor God for His goodness, he offered burnt offering and sacrifices to God, Aaron, Moses' brother and interpreter, accompanied with all the elders of Israel, they ate bread with the priest in the presence of God. Now, it was time for Moses to demonstrate his God given powers to lead and to serve as judge to the people. Moses mounted his ruling seat, as the people watched him all day long, waiting to be judged or to witness those being judge. This process indeed disturbed the priest who was observing Moses working and judging continually. The priest said to Moses, "What are you doing in the life of these people? And why are you doing all of this work alone? You have people that are standing around you day and evening with nothing to do." This question raised Moses level of awareness, thus causing him to attempt to justify his reason for handling things the way he did. His answer was that the people relied on him to seek and interpret the will of God and to offer recommendations, according to God's law and decrees.

After listening to Moses explanation, which he tried to relentless clarify, the priest informed Moses that what he was doing would eventually cause him to become overwhelmed and place in the position of being ineffective, he proceeded to inform him that he [Moses] and the people would soon dissipate themselves. The priest then offered some advice to Moses along with God's blessings as well. Moses was to become the

representative of the people before God, and have their disputes brought to him, to teach them the decrees and laws, the way they should live and the duties they should perform.

These recommendations really disturbed the conscious of Moses and ushered him to wonder how this should be done. Moses was to evaluate and select capable men and appoint them as officials and leaders. These men should prove to be trustworthy and hate dishonest gain. These men are to serve in the position of Judges for all the people, having them to deal with the minor issues and forward the major and intrusive ones to Moses, thus allowing all their concerns to be addressed. Moses adhered to the advice from his father-in-law and was successful in his leadership.

Jethro saw the tremendous task and burden that over-shadowed Moses as a leader and judge. He encouraged Moses to utilize some of the knowledgeable men who encircled him to be his assistant. The primary purpose of the recommendation was to be able to serve a large volume of people; this process was much needed. He was entrusted to place them in groups which not only made it much easier to serve, but kept order and organization, and it allowed Moses burdens to be minimized. When organization is utilized, the task of leadership and discipleship is much more workable, and the process encourages and invites the period of transition or transiting into being. Moses had to move within the limitations of the close proximity of his mental capacity. He was able to commission the elders to provide services for those who were members of various groups.

Like in the Old Testament, Moses the writer explains a passage in the New Testament to justify the fact that organization is present. When organization is present, then discipleship and leadership will allow one to experience a period of transitioning

that is found in the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew and Mark are similar than that of the other Gospels not mentioning of the Great Commission. Luke and John recorded nothing concerning the Great Commission, but examined the faith of the disciples and their disbelief.

During His public ministry, Jesus spent more than three years making disciples. He taught them and trained the chosen twelve. He gave them convincing proofs that He was the Son of God, the promised Messiah; they believed in Him. Jesus also spoke to crowds, but often spoke with His disciples in private to teach them the meaning of His parable and miracles. This was done in an effort to ensure that His earthly ministry would continue upon His departure. As He sent them out on various ministry assignments, He told them that He would be returning to His Father following His death and resurrection (Mt 16:21, Jn 12:23-36, 14:2-4).

It was hard for the disciples to understand the teaching that Jesus was giving them, but He assured them that if they had faith in Him and follow the teaching, He would do even greater things, because He was going to His Father. Jesus promised them that He would send His Spirit to be with them forever (Jn 14:16-17).

Matthew Gospel 28:18-20 was to show how Jesus could take ordinary men and transition the church to and through many nations. The Gospel of Matthew has been a historical model for discipleship, expanding and transitioning the church.⁸

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

⁸ Trent Butler, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 366.

The Great Commission is an issue containing Standing Orders for all believers. Having been resurrected being the first born from the dead, now meets with his disciples on a hilltop in Galilee. As they foster their doubtful eyes upon His holy and radiant face, John and the other disciples immediately began to worship and praise His holy name. Peter and Thomas looked at them and decided not to celebrate because of uncertainty of Jesus's resurrection. Their uncertainty came by way of the news coming from the chief priest and the scribe saying that the resurrection of Jesus was an unholy statement and that His disciples stole Jesus's body. This news started the imagination of the disciples and the believers of Jesus Christ.

This was perfect timing for Jesus to authenticate His power and authority. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me." He always had all authority, but now He speaks of authority as the head of the new creation. In John 17:2, Jesus death, and resurrection gave Him the authority to offer eternal life to those who wish to receive it. He was also given the power as the first born of all creation. After completing the redemptive work given to Him by His father, now He has the authority as the firstborn from the dead "and in all things, He may have preeminence" (Col 1:15, 18).

This must have been quite difficult for the disciples to be in a meeting which took a day to arrive and to be in the presence of Jesus for only a few minutes. The disciples were amazed by the presence of Jesus. Some worshipped and honored Him while others doubted. So Jesus addressed their doubts and their disbeliefs as an instructor would do for their students. As chief of the new creation, Jesus now orders His disciple to transition

the church through discipleship, and evangelism. Jesus gave His disciples a commission to make disciples of all nations.

The first step towards creating an environment conducive to teaching is to open hearts to learn and apply the truth of God's Word. Class leaders encourage members in the class to discover the gifts God has given them and to step out in faith to serve utilizing those gifts. God has a larger stake in this ministry, as it is his desire that members reach this level of attention for fellowship, spiritual discipline and the potential to impart knowledge that exists, "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24).

Michael J. Christensen is the former director and Carl E. Savage is the current director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Drew Theological School and co-authors of a book entitled, *Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry*, which provides a very interesting perspective on preparing laity to participate in the ministry of the church. Christensen and Savage provide a critical perspective particularly in light of the fact that several experts on church growth and congregational life argue that our approach to ministry over the next few years must include the aide of called, trained, and committed leaders raised from among the laity. Christensen and Savage provide insight as to how the lay leadership is recruited. More importantly *Equipping the Saints* provides information critical to the development of the required training and the role that clergy plays in the partnership. *Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry* proposes a radical approach to ministry that is intended to address the two challenges of the next new church. The challenges are, according to Christensen and Savage, getting clear who Jesus is and clearing out spiritual deformities that disorders the church's structural life

and disables its mission.⁹ It uses a collection of narratives and case studies to help present new paradigm models and strategies helpful in mobilizing lay leaders and preparing them for “under-shepherd” ministry.

Christensen and Savage present a radical perspective proposing to reorganize the traditional distinctions between the ordained and non-ordained that would include establishing new forms of ministerial leadership, a different looking ecclesial structure, and radical ministry methods geared to more appropriately provide ministry to the church of the future.

Certainly, more can and should be done to prepare laity to participate with clergy as partners in ministry. However, my research in preparation for my ministry project clearly supports the notion that there is no need to abolish the current order of clergy and laity in the African Methodist Church, at least not in Greater Saint Luke. Our research has supported our thought that our congregation is interested in the development of a more effective method to allow the two entities to work together in ministry without diminishing the roles of the ordained clergy and the non-ordained lay leadership.

Several things must be accomplished as the disciples are commissioned and sent out. First they must make disciples with no distinction, for all nations regardless of their social political and religious preference; the teaching and preaching of the Gospel must do this. This will encourage new believers to follow the Savior. They must go from door to door transmitting and transitioning the invisible church from the church with walls to a church without walls by offering the teaching of Jesus with power and perseverance according to Matthew 28:19. Secondly, the people who have received the teaching and

⁹ Michael J. Christensen and Carl E. Savage, *Equipping The Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 7.

are ready to move the church must be baptized and washed with water, which is an outward sign of inward purity, which indicates that they are being identified with the suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. This will teach them obedience to the lordship of Christ and to acknowledge the fact that they were purchased from the slave market of sin. God is their father, Christ is their Lord and Savior, and the Holy Spirit is their comforter and guide. They are to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, we must teach with force and convictions that others may make a decision to become disciples of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to make other disciples as well. The narrative in this verse admonishes the disciples to encourage them to observe all things that the Lord had commanded them to do. We must be mindful that commission is not limited to evangelism; we cannot make converts and not teach them the basic fundamentals of Christianity and discipleship. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Paul express his concern for those who are new in Christ that should be given milk until they are mature enough to partake meat. They also need to be instructed how to be obedient to Christ and his will for them.

We must lead and teach consistently until all the age has been consumed. There are times when the journey of teaching, preaching and doing the work of discipleship becomes tedious and challenging. We must be reminded of the promises of God our Savior as He reassures us that He would be with us to the end. This was a promise from Christ and has sustained His followers in the midst of their pain, suffering, and death; a promise that gave the disciples strength in all of their weakness from the highest mountain to the lowest valley.

Christ used the most ordinary things to lead people to Himself in order that they might have life. At a well, He spoke of Himself as the water of life that quenches deep thirst. To the hungry, He is the bread of life. To the cripple and the sick, He is the one who could make them whole again. There are opportunities for witnessing all around us. Our responsibility is to develop the alertness of mind and the zeal for sharing God's love that will enable us to take advantage of every opportunity provided by the Lord. We must study to develop a witnessing mindset, ever asking God to give us the ability to see the opportunities for discipleship, which He brings into our path each and every day.

So it is with the organization/structure of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church per the 2012 *Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* through which we are governed. We have in place the following entities: the Class Leader system and the Board of Stewards whose primary responsibility is to look after the spiritual welfare of the members.

The Office of Steward requires persons to be of solid piety, know and love the word of God, fruitful, and of natural or acquired ability to transact the spiritual and temporal business of the church—there should be a training course for prospective stewards under the supervision of the pastor and senior stewards. They shall seek the needy in order to relieve and comfort them. The purpose of the Class Leader is to discern whether its members are working out their own salvation and to receive what they contribute to the support of the Gospel.

While these entities serve well within the visible church, the need for discipleship training and the sending out of those trained would help to bridge the visible church with the invisible church. I can criticize the Black church because I am a part of it. In making a

fair assessment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church specifically, one has to view the positive as well as the negative aspects of its operation. In order for the church to be relevant, it must be accessible. People need to be able to access the church and its services. The church has often left people disappointed in the hour of their greatest need. As found in Matthew 20:19, with the Great Commission, Jesus challenged the disciples to go out into all the world to teach and preach the gospel. This teaching cannot be done on Sunday Morning, and at Wednesday night Bible Study, this teaching and preaching should be an everyday task.

The Christian church, the Black church is a continuation of what Christ did during his earthly ministry. While training for the purpose of discipleship, the church must use language that can be clearly understood. We are living in two realities, living here on earth and traveling to another world. The needs of both must be addressed, but distinguished and placed in context. We must use inclusive language if we are to be relevant and heard. We must understand that people are people and when we are confronted and confront people, we must treat them as children of God. Race, class, sex, and sexual orientation should not matter.

The voice of one trained for the office of discipleship should be a prophetic one and our outlook should be one of faith and hope. Just as it was with Jesus when he met the woman at the well; Jesus did not allow barriers to hinder his purpose of giving the woman a new outlook on life. An understanding and the ability to embrace what Jesus did is a clue to what we should model and strive to imitate as we build the church without walls.

Moses was a reluctant leader who wanted to learn and be led by God's direction. When encouraging others to grow in Christ, we must task responsibility/accountability and be submissive to God through humility and servanthood. Discipleship training should include social justice. Social justice must be a part of what the church, pastor, and the people should address. It is important that the pastor/preacher become involved in politics. As we move on to a new age, the church and her leaders must/should be at the forefront of civil rights and social justice. After we, the people, gain a footing and foothold, we must reach back and bring others.

Discipleship is helping God's people take the next faithful step. In Exodus 18:13-26, Moses's father-in-law Jethro saw Moses becoming overwhelmed and suggested that he delegate his authority to those who were capable of assisting him. Jesus did likewise according to Matthew 28:18-20; he not only commanded them to go, He encouraged them to preach the Gospel that others may become learners and followers of Jesus Christ. He also encouraged them that the word should not be limited.

Traditionally, there is one senior pastor, one leader appointed to shepherd the local church flock. As such, it is normally assumed that the responsibility for spiritual growth and development rests solely with him/her. However, no one person can do it all. No matter how organized, how efficient, how well meaning or even how strong the pastor's gifts for ministry are, he/she is one person and cannot effectively be all things to all people.

The biblical example of a leader, the need to delegate, and a need for help in ministry can be found in the life of Moses. Moses was a great leader and, with the help of God, was able to accomplish great things. Moses, led by God, brought his people out of

the bondage of slavery all the way to the edge of the Promised Land. However the biblical account of Moses' greatness also reminds us that he was a man and, as such, was subject to burnout as any other mortal. One account of Moses' ministry (Ex 17:9-13) is of a time when his people battled the Amalekites. Moses delegated the lead role in the battle to Joshua. Moses, Aaron, and Hur positioned themselves on a hilltop where they could see what was going on. Moses stood on the hilltop and held his rod up before God. The story says that as long as Moses held the rod up the Israelites were winning, but as Moses grew tired and his arms grew weary, he began to lower the rod. As the rod lowered the enemy began to gain ground.

As the pastor appointed to shepherd the flock at Greater Saint Luke, I am beginning to understand, like Moses, that I am unable to do everything by myself. There at least twenty ministries in the church. Each of the ministries, by tradition, lists the pastor as the ex-officio chair. To attempt to physically micro-manage each of the ministries, attending to all of the minute details, supervising and directing every move will, in very short order, wear the pastor down. While fit and strong, the pastor will provide adequate direction and leadership (arms raising the rod toward God; lives are being won to Christ, members are moved to a stronger faith in God, the church grows spiritually and physically). However, as the pastor's strength begins to fade, there is a possibility for things to go undone and things to slip through the cracks. This is a critical time in the life of the church as it opens a door where the "devil gets into the details" and infighting begins.

Delegation fails if the job is not put into the hands of able, godly men. There are three common confusions about discipleship. One is the confusion regarding authority.

Authority can be given, but discipleship must be taught and demonstrated. One of the key factors about discipleship is change. Change is good and sometimes change can be seen as a threat to others. The approach to implementing the change can lessen the negative affect that it has on others.

A good disciple should be confident. This confidence should flow in their conversations and body language. It is important to have confidence, because when a time of crisis occurs, they should be able to keep a positive and confident demeanor. The truest test is not how one conducts themselves, when things are calm, but how one acts in times of a crisis.

In the gospel of Luke 4:18, Jesus makes an announcement that affirms his purpose of coming into this world. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor." When Jesus met someone who was hungry, he fed them. He says to us "go and do likewise." The ministry of Jesus was inclusive. He met the people where they were. Likewise if we are to be true disciples, we too must learn to meet the people where they are; we must put into practice the true meaning of stewardship and discipleship. We too must show that we are accountable and dependable and are true men and women called to the purpose of carrying the word of God into remote places.

So then, what is discipleship? In the biblical context, a disciple means a follower of Jesus. The word disciple is so much a part of our Christian Faith that it hardly has any meaning outside of Christianity. The most essential thing that sets Christians apart from the world is that Christians live for and through Christ. A Christian disciple then is one who must accept and assist in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Christian

discipleship is the process in which disciples grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit who resides and resonates in our hearts that will aid us as we overcome as we help other through our faith and testimony, overcome the pressures and trials of this present life and become more Christ-like.

This process requires us to read and study the word daily, we should study it as well as pray over what we have studied, relying on the Holy Spirit to help us interpret, as we examine our thoughts, words and actions. We should always be ready to give a testimony that offers hope that is within us (1 Pt 3:15). Christian disciples should also foster and involve personal growth, which includes putting Jesus first in all things (Mk 8:34-38). We must be as obedient children and doers of the Word. Christ lived a life of total and complete obedience during His earthly ministry. He relied on his faith and was totally submissive to His Father even to the point of death.

The power of the Holy Spirit is nothing that we can conjure up; it comes through seeking and allowing a change to take place in our hearts. This change begins on the inside and radiates to our outer personhood. When a change takes place in our hearts, it overflows by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, which causes us to change our conduct, thoughts, words, and actions.

Bible teacher, John F. MacArthur states that discipleship is more than just being a learner, it is being an intimate follower having an intimate relationship, following to the point where one would go as far as death out of love. There is no question that the only message Jesus ever proclaimed was a message of discipleship. The call that Jesus gave was a call to follow Him, a call to submission, and a call to obedience. It was never a plea to make some kind of momentary decision to acquire forgiveness and peace and haven

and then go on living anyway you want. Jesus' teaching on discipleship took place well into His ministry and was addressed primarily to His disciples as a further revelation of the kind of commitment He desired of His already saved followers. He explained these conditions against the background of His own commitment that would lead to His death in order to invest them with the fullest significance for those who desired God's will. If the conditions of discipleship are also conditions for salvation, then every Christian is by definition a disciple, and by salvation, the conditions are costly. If these conditions are met, then the issue of discipleship must be distinguished from the issue.¹⁰

Matthew says make disciples. Mark says preach the gospel. Luke says proclaim repentance for forgiveness and speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ. It's all one and the same. The Great Commission then is to preach the death and resurrection of Christ, preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and calls for faith to make disciples. The mission of the church is to make disciples to bring people into an intimate relationship with God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus was called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God. The gospel the Lord promised his prophets is contained in the scriptures regarding his Son, who was a descendant of David, and who through the spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord, and through Him, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all gentiles.

Later, because of disciples such as Martin Luther and others, Europe was open to the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Reformation. Eventually, Christians immigrated to

¹⁰ "Faith Alone," *Grace Evangelical Society*, accessed February 2, 2014, <http://faithalone.org/>.

the New World to make Christ known. Though the world is not completely evangelized, the challenge is as viable now as ever before. The command of our Lord remains, “Go and make disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” The characteristics of a disciple may be simply stated as:

- One who is assured of his salvation (Jn 3:16) and is activated by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26-27).
- One who is growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior (2 Pt 3:18).
- One who shares Christ’s burden for the lost souls of men and women. Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field” (Mt 9:37-38).¹¹

The Great Commission is still relevant today in our ministerial context. We must embrace this concept with the hope of engaging those not only beyond the walls of our church, but to those who maybe within our walls. We must find ways to be effective in engaging our discipleship focus by opening the doors of our churches, reaching out to those within the communities we serve, and sharing that we are interested in their souls and not their pocketbooks.

We must continue working on the local, state, national, and global platform to build a strong ecumenical community. The African Methodist Episcopal Church has intentionally organized to achieve this by having as part of the senior body of the administration, a position called the ecumenical officer. This gives the authority to the position to communicate across denominational lines to accomplish common goals that will benefit the local, state, national, and global communities.

¹¹ John MacArthur, “What Does It Mean to Make Disciples?” accessed April 11, 2013, www.gty.org, February 7, 2013.

Serving people has been rewarding. We have heard that the love of other believers is evidence of being a member of God's family. Love should now be the attitude of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church as we seek love that is not an emotion but rather an action. We must busy ourselves as we strive towards reclaiming, retaining, and empowering people. We cannot sit and wait for people to show up on our church doors. For a long time now we have gone to the trees and seen nothing but leaves. The branches of our lives need fruit. God is depending on us to focus on what we have in common, bring our opinions and views to the table to work.

Therefore, the members of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church must reach to those beyond the walls of the visible church to witness and testify to nonbelievers about the wonderful changes Jesus Christ has made in our lives. No matter what our Christian maturity may be, we have something to offer. The longer you are a believer, the more you have something to offer.

Through discipleship training this pastor will encourage his members to utilize every opportunity to witness. As Christian disciples, we should never become over consumed with our own personal experiences that it affects our ability to encourage others who are searching for a better way of life.

God desires of us to use our relationship with Him to reach beyond our restraints of comfort to those who are walking in darkness. He desires of us to be a light—a light to help those who are lost and otherwise cast down. Christian disciples must testify to our faith as to stir the spirit of unbelievers causing them to thirst after Christ.

I will continue to encourage the members of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, to become

more spiritual in order that as they spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Jesus told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough” (Mt 13:33).

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Charleston is the oldest and second largest city in the southeastern state of South Carolina. It was founded in 1670 as Charles Towne in honor of King Charles II of England; Charleston adopted its present name in 1783. Known for its rich history, well-preserved architecture, distinguished restaurants, and mannerly people, Charleston has received a large number of accolades.

The first settlers primarily came from England, its Caribbean colony of Barbados, and its Atlantic colony of Bermuda. Among these were free people of color, established in the West Indies where color lines were looser in the early colonial years. Charles Towne was attracted a mixture of ethnic and religious groups. French, Scottish, Irish, and Germans migrated to the developing seacoast town, representing numerous Protestant denominations.¹

Although the city lost the status of state capital to Columbia, South Carolina, Charleston became even more prosperous in the plantation-dominated economy of the post-Revolutionary years. By 1820 Charleston's population had grown to 23,000 with a Black majority.

African American Christians were taught the Bible; they were taught that the God of the Bible was the ruler of the universe and superior to all other gods. God punished

¹ "Charleston South Carolina," accessed May 7, 2014, <http://www.charleston-sc.gov/index.aspx?nid=110>.

and rewarded Blacks and whites. Blacks, however, were expected to accept their lot in this world and if they were obedient and honest and truthful, they would be rewarded in the world after death. Christianity provided some aspects of faith and practice that were continuous with the African experience.

The teachings of Christianity were translated into a religious pragmatism by which the slaves dealt with those destructive and threatening aspects of their real situation. Certain biblical and theological concepts of Christianity were diverted into structures of belief and practice that served the needs of the slaves, such as physical survival, psychic stability, and ultimately liberation.

The slaves identified with the house of Israel. They saw a Babylon into which they like the Israelites would be delivered. This sentiment is expressed in the Negro Spiritual, which says, "Didn't God deliver Daniel, why not every man?"

African American religion taught the slaves that God is the ultimate answer to the question of faith in the face of suffering. In the Negro Spirituals, the slaves do not question the justice and goodness of God. God's righteousness is taken for granted. The matter of concern is the faithfulness of the community of believers in a world full of trouble. The African American Church instilled in its believers a faith, which rested upon the belief that the righteousness of God ultimately wins out over the evil of this world. The believer must pray for strength to keep faith in the midst of trouble.

In many ways, the African American Church has affirmed for African Americans the fact that "we are somebody." The early independent African American church represents a type of efficient organization. This question of the status of African Americans in white churches was very much an issue in the schisms, which were created

into these bodies. African Americans tended to conduct their services according to their own mode of religious expression, though their own mode of religious expression, through usually under the supervision of whites.

When an organization has reached the formal stage of development, there are two alternatives for its next stage. It may continue along its same path, sometimes trying to revive old behavior, and ultimately decline. It may however, make a reassessment of its values and objectives, develop new values and objectives, and proceed along new paths.

During the period from 1800 to 1865, African Americans in the North could protest against restrictions against themselves. These restrictions were less severe in the North than they were in the South. Northern African Americans also had greater opportunity for self-expression than their Southern counterpart.

Justice is supposed to build peace, pursue truth, shape communities, uphold right, and deliver the oppressed. The indifference as it relates to the outcome or a person's conclusion on the issue of what is just, depends on the character of the person delivering justice. If our justice is to reflect the character of God, then the person delivering justice should possess godly character. Justice is sacred, because it is a dimension of the One who makes us just.

Therefore, it is believed that we must be willing to take a stand toward that same justice, which offers truth, shapes communities, uphold right, and delivers the oppressed. The church must continue to be involved in this kind of justice as it relates to the social and economical welfare of the community. However, we must be willing to continue to persevere through racial or cultural differences in order to meet the needs of the people.

If we continue to pursue and involve justice which contains Godly wisdom and character, then we can rest assured knowing that we will not have to worry about our lives.

The Black church has several models when it comes to its origin. Richard Allen, the founder of the AME Church, believed that one cannot accomplish goals alone, or should even try to accomplish goals alone. It takes working with others to make your goals a reality.

In June 1822, he was kept under constant guard at the Work House, a frame building for the punishment of slaves, located near the marshes that then marked the western limit of the city of Charleston, South Carolina. No Black person without a special authorization was allowed within two blocks of the building throughout the week.

In his work, both as a slave and as a free carpenter, white people trusted him, and until his arrest, some apparently liked his company. “He then read in the Bible where God commanded that all should be cut off, both men, women and children, and he said he believed, it was no sin for us to do so, for the Lord had commanded us to do it” (Dt 2:33-34).²

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for nearly thirty-eight years in search for a land promised to them by God. They were to keep the ordinance of God and not disturb the Edomites or the Ammonites, or the Moabites. They were to make an attack on and with Sihon, King of the Amorites who they had some previous quarrel.

The Moabites dwelt in a country, which had belonged to a numerous race of giants, called Emim as tall as the Anakim, and was extremely dangerous. The Edomite’s in like manner dispossessed the Harim from Mount Seir, and took their country in their

² “This Far by Faith,” accessed April 28, 2014, www.pbs.org.

possession. The Ammonites likewise got possession of the country that had been formally been inhabited by the giants call Zamzummim who were crafty and wick men.

As the Israelites advanced their way toward Canaan, many of the original Israelites died and the younger generations who were numbered at Mount Sinai could not see the land that God had promised, only Joshua and Caleb. The Israelites were forbidden to engage in war against the Canaanites until all of the men who were trained and learned in the art of war from the Egyptians were consumed and dead from among the group. The direction is given that the new generation be raised and trained in the wilderness so that they might be seen as men fighting under the direction of God and not men.

They were told specifically not to aggravate or meddle with the Moabites or the Ammonites, even if they attempted to ruin Israel. They were the sons and daughters of Lot, and the land in which they occupied was that which God had given them. The Israelites were not meant to obtain this land, so Moses and the Israelites passed quietly through the land of the Moabites and the Ammonites in search for the land promised to them by God. Now we see God recompenses them for their obedience by giving them possession of the County of Sihon, King of the Ammonites.

This gesture would teach the Israelites that sometimes in life we would have to fight for what God has promised us. God also promised them, that when they fight, He would fight for them. He would allow Israel to destroy the Amorites and magnify Israel so they would know that He is God and keeps His promises. Moses wanted to keep the peace, however, he sent to Sihon a request to enter a passage through his land and promised to cause no disturbance. God made the King's heart harden and kept a peaceful spirit from him causing him to begin a war with the Israelites.

God had previously warned against aggravating and meddling with his people. When we become conflicted with the people God has chosen, He then allows them to become victorious. The Israelites destroyed the Amorite's men, women, and children by the sword. This was an act of God's wrath against the Amorites; they died not as the enemies of the Israelites, but as a sacrifice to the divine justice of God.

The request from Denmark Vesey to his followers was to read from the Bible how the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt from the hands of Pharaoh. This theme was akin to the deliverance from Egypt, the movement of God among his captured people. Was the planned insurrection the right thing to do? Denmark Vesey had obligated himself as the liberator of his people. His only concern was that all of his people know freedom. In his final desperate act, he took the fight or flight position.

Captain Joseph Vesey was described in 1781, when he was about thirty-four years old, as a noticeably light-complexioned man of above average height. He was born in Bermuda, and this island, located north of the Caribbean West Indies, never supported the large sugar plantations or Black slave populations of the tropics; instead, white men made their living by shipbuilding and supplying the West Indies and North America with agricultural staples and slaves.

In 1781, two years before settling in Charleston, Vesey obtained an individual human property, and thus, Joseph Vesey's name becoming historically linked to the future insurrectionist, Denmark Vesey. Captain Vesey had sailed that year to the port of Cape Francois on French St. Domingue, later the Republic of Haiti, with a cargo of 390 slaves. Among them was a Black boy approximately fourteen who said his name was Telemaque or so his name registered in the ear of his masters. Captain Vesey having no

use for the boy, sold him among other slaves only after three months to find himself back in the possession of his once sold slave master. The plantation owner stated that Telemaque had suffered several epileptic fits, which were confirmed by a French physician. However, once back in the possession of Captain Vesey, no further episodes were recorded.

The Captain was intrigued with this boy's beauty, alertness, and intelligence; he was brought above deck, given a new set of clothes, and assigned new duties. Upon his repossession of Telemaque, the Captain renamed him Denmark Vesey. Young Denmark was appointed the personal assistant of the Captain and he was regarded as a valuable slave at Charleston for seventeen more years. Denmark Vesey's familiarization with languages would have made him a valuable and almost indispensable addition to the crew of an African-bound slave ship. He was knowledgeable of Danish, French, and English as a matter of survival; and as a mature man, he was known to be deeply literate in English and French and possibly also conversant in Gullah and Creole.

In 1790, Captain Vesey sold his ships, and purchased property in Charleston and set up business as a moderately successful merchant at 27 ½ Bay Street. He was listed in the 1790 census as head of a household, which included eight slaves, including Denmark. For the next seventeen years, Denmark Vesey worked as a slave in this place called Charleston in the Christian language, as a South Carolina Muslim slave. Vesey's own relationship with or sympathies toward Islam remains unknown. The evidence is both inconclusive and intriguing. He self-educated himself and was noted to be remarkable as

it was illegal for slaves to do so. He learned to read and write with great discernment.

While working as a slave, he constantly read anti-slavery literature.³

In 1800, Denmark in his late fifties was allowed to purchase his freedom for \$600.00 after purchasing a ticket in the East Bay Street lottery around December 9, 1799; he bet on number 1-8-8-4. However, he would not learn of his winnings until early in the year of 1800. He had won a total of \$1,500.00. After purchasing his manumission, Denmark Vesey was left with \$900.00 to begin his freedom. He was able to rent a home on 20 Bull Street, which was located within three blocks of the private residences of both the governor of South Carolina and the mayor of Charleston. He acknowledged seven women as his wives at foreign ports and in Charleston—he fathered at least two sons and raised several stepchildren. As a freed Black, he was both financially and socially elevated above the anonymous crowds of slaves in Charleston’s streets—he became a mainstream or a bourgeois Black.⁴

He began to worship at the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, an exclusively Black organized congregation. Denmark became one of about 1400 free Blacks living within the city. He cut his ties with the free mulatto society who more often tried to emulate white behavior by copying their lifestyle and owning slaves. Most of the mulattoes felt a closer kinship with whites than Blacks; they even avoided the exclusively

³ “Black History Month: Denmark Vesey Rebellion,” accessed May 16, 2014, <http://keepingupwiththejones-markjones.blogspot.com/2010/02/black-history-month-denmark-vesey.html>.

⁴ David Robertson, *Denmark Vesey: the Buried Story of America's Largest Slave Rebellion and the Man Who Led It* (New York, NY: Vintage Press, 2000), 41.

Black AME church and worshipped at the traditional Anglican churches, St. Phillip and St. Michael's.⁵

Denmark became a leader of the AME church in Charleston. At a time when most Blacks (free or slave) could not read or write. Denmark was well read and fluent in several languages. During his time as a church leader, he began to teach passages from the Bible, which he claimed showed a moral imperative for freedom, much as the leaders of the 1960 civil rights did 140 years later. Denmark conducted Bible lessons at church, in his home, and in slave quarters throughout the Charleston area. When someone objected to Denmark's vision of a violent revolution he would state, "The Lord has commanded it."

On December 3, 1817, the city guard (police) raided the AME Church and arrested 469 blacks, charging them with disorderly conduct, but the congregation preserved, however on June 9, 1818, the city once again raided the church. One hundred and forty free Blacks and slaves, including twelve ministers, and one Bishop, were arrested and brought to the Guard House. Five of the ministers and the Bishop were sentence to banishment from the state.⁶

Denmark preached from the Old Testament and constantly reminded the people of the successful Haitian slave rebellion. Through his teaching, Demark was able to convince the large population of slaves that due to the over population of Blacks in the area, the white masters were looking for the most effective way to eliminate the surplus

⁵ "Black History Month: Denmark Vesey Rebellion," accessed May 16, 2014, <http://keepingupwiththejones-markjones.blogspot.com/2010/02/black-history-month-denmark-vesey.html>.

⁶ "Black History Month: Denmark Vesey Rebellion."

of slaves. The plan was to kill the non-productive, weak, old and the infirmed. He further encouraged them that God had approved their plan.

By April 1822, word had spread to the country slaves that the date for the rebellion had been chosen, Sunday, July 14, the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. Choosing Sunday for the day of rebellion was a brilliant strategy since that was the only day Blacks were allowed to congregate in the market and attend church services.

By mid-July, many white militia officers had left town for their summer vacation to Newport, Rhode Island. This was a perfect opportunity as there would be less experienced military men in town. It is told that Denmark trusted his aides in collecting weapons and hiding them in sporadic locations throughout the city. It was agree that they were going to set the city on fire in several places. Denmark reminded those involved that “every servant in the yards to be ready with axes, knives, and clubs, to kill every [white] man as he came out when [fire] bells rang.” In Denmark Vesey’s final order as told, he ordered that none were spared, no woman, or children or ministers. It is stated that he ordered that no white skin was left alive.⁷

What was constant fear to the white population was to be future opportunity for Denmark Vesey. By 1800, the numbers were 18,768 whites 63,615 Blacks. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many of these new slaves remained within the greater Charleston district to supplement or replace the Black labor pool among the rice and cotton plantations surrounding the peninsular city.

Vesey began the second decade of his freedom attending the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. A congregation that emphasized distinctively colored forms of

⁷ Robertson, *Denmark Vesey*, 60.

worship. He was distinguished for great strength and activity and in recruiting slaves from the outlying plantations to his conspiracy in the year before his planned revolt. He was both a Presbyterian and a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1817, Vesey co-founded a branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Vesey's plans could not have progressed as far as they did without the organization and membership of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, commonly called the "African Church" founded by Blacks at Charleston at 1817.⁸

All of Vesey's closest fellow conspirators were African Methodist Episcopal members except one. Vesey told the members that there was but one minister who preached the gospel—Vesey presented himself both as that Black minister and as the Black messiah.

Everything was set in place for the planned insurrection when on May 25, 1822 Peter Prioleau, a house slave was running an errand for his master when he was approached by a Black man who was considered stranger to him. The slave inquired of Peter if he had heard that something serious was about to take place. Peter stated to his master that he informed the stranger that he was not aware of what was going to take place but thought that it was serious, he also informed his master that the stranger stated that they were going to shake off their bondage and they were looking for many to join. He also stated that if he was interested that he would take him and show him the man who has a list of names and would take his.

Governor Bennett found this news hard to believe because of the Black population's attitude toward their masters was loving and loyal. However, on June 14, 1822, the realization was real. It was reported that a public disturbance was contemplated

⁸ Robertson, *Denmark Vesey*, 9.

by Black's and that a moment should not be lost in informing the authorities as the succeeding Sunday, the 16th, at twelve o'clock at night, was the period fixed for the uprising.

The plot to execute their enslavers and temporarily liberate the City of Charleston failed for Vesey and his group of slaves and free Blacks. Vesey and his followers escaped to Haiti to escape retaliation. Because two slaves leaked the plot, James Cone says, "Their suffering becomes his; their despair, divine despair. Through Christ the poor man is offered freedom now to rebel against that which makes him other than human."⁹

He was kept under constant guard throughout that third week of June 1822. He was being held for a planned insurrection at what was known then as the "Work House." The building was a framed building used for the punishment of slaves located near the marshes of the Western limit of the city of Charleston, South Carolina. During the week of the trial, no Black person was allowed in this area within two blocks with special permission.

Justice for Blacks was different than justice for whites in Charleston in 1822. There was no trial by jury; instead, Blacks were tried before a group of judges, and the verdict did not have to be unanimous. There was no requirement that counsel be present. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt commented on South Carolina slave justice.¹⁰

June 19, 1822, court opened and the trials began. Over the next seven days, a total of 131 Blacks were arrested; fifteen were acquitted and thirty-eight others were discharged after serving a prison sentence and whippings at the Work House. Forty-three

⁹ "This Far by Faith: African American Spiritual Journeys," accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/this-far-by-faith/>.

¹⁰ "Black History Month: Denmark Vesey Rebellion."

others were transported to other states as slaves at the owner's expense. No defender was allowed to defend the accused, the judges were given the power to condemn them to whatever type of punishment they deemed necessary and thought proper according to their laws. In those days, simple theft of a Negro was death. If a white man killed a Black man, he paid a fine of three thousand six hundred dollars. For the crime of beating a Black man; a white man paid one thousand five hundred dollars. If a white man were to put out the eyes, cut off the tongue, or castrate a Black man, he would pay a fine of four hundred and twenty eight dollars. If a Black man killed a white man or even wounded a white man, he would be put to death.

Throughout his trial, Vesey was recorded as a Black and freeman. He was recorded to be at least sixty years of age. He was an established carpenter, employing several helpers and was settled into a very nice neighborhood. Upon purchasing his freedom, Vesey could have left Charleston, but he had no will to go to Africa; he wanted to stay and see what he could do for his fellow creatures. He was brought to trial accused of planning a well-planned slave insurrection in the history of the United States of America. He was accused of planning to seize the United States arsenal and ships at the harbor in Charleston. It was recorded that over nine thousand slaves were recruited for his insurrection.

During the week of his trial, it is recorded that Vesey made no confession and stated no final words on his way to gallows. He requested and was granted permission by the court to conduct his own cross-examination. The authorities noted after his death that Vesey's cross-examination displayed great penetration and sound judgment.

When Vesey was questioned regarding his church membership, Vesey replied that he was not associated with any. The author believes that this was a final attempt to save what was left of the AME church or that he may have chosen to deny any affiliations because he was covering up the fact that he had used the church to plan and recruit members for his revolution. After the death of Vesey, it was recorded that on July 2, 1822, fourteen of the Blacks arrested that month were identified as former AME members.

To what extent is it possible to define oneself fully as an African-American? To what extent is such identification desirable in regards to both the self-intent and self-interest of Black individual and the majority society? In retaliation for past wrongs against his race, he was prepared to destroy a major city and all the white people within it, and seek sanctuary on another continent, among other people of color.

Demark Vesey's near-success and his silence before his persecutors became an important example of "the theology of hope." Writing in 1974 of Vesey and Poyas's commands of silence to their followers, one theologian interpreted their muteness in prison as a directive to twentieth-century Black and white Christians to continue their revolutionary activism.¹¹ In his last attempt to liberate, Vesey encouraged the men to not speak, and remain silent before their accusers.

Vesey will remain known forever as a liberator of the oppressed, a potential murderer of the innocent or perhaps a passionate religionist. There are several questions that remain unanswered, what was his skin type, and where did his wealth of knowledge derive from. We have no knowledge of what type of execution was administered to

¹¹ Robertson, *Denmark Vesey*, 142.

Vesey, where he was buried, if he was buried, or burned. His executioners sought to erase his very existence from the face of earth. But out of the ashes of what was is still the need to have questions answered.

The African-American leaders have fought to have memorials established to commemorate his life and death. A picture was donated of what was to be a drawing of Vesey. Because history records no likeness of Vesey, the artist decided to draw a picture of the back of a man believed to be Vesey speaking to a crowd of African-Americans. Just recently a stature was erect in memory of Vesey at Hampton Park in Charleston, South Carolina just blocks away from Ashley Avenue where he was assumed hanged by his accusers.

If a Black man's rights are being denied, we must be committed to his fight, we must have an interest in overthrowing injustice in dealing with inequality in the church, as well as the lives of the African American society.

Many African Americans have bitterly experienced having their belief and practice of Christianity denounced by leading exponents of hate, bigotry, and prejudice. The Black church in the African American experience prompted a way for an African American society to become liberated by unifying its people, encouraging them to stand on their religious convictions, and organizing a powerful religious denomination that is substantiated through faith in Jesus Christ.

In the midst of the African American liberation, Christianity presented itself in its pure form; as a result, Black leaders such as Bishop Richard Allen, Reverend Absalom Jones, and Bishop Daniel Payne in conjunction with many other religious leaders and

Black congregates made noteworthy contributions to improve our lives and culture, in spite of differences, ideals, and attitudes that came against the church.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church played a magnanimous role in the liberation of Black people by establishing institutions of higher learning, and teaching leadership and discipleship to take the message of hope and faith in Jesus Christ to His people, so that they can move with political, social and economic powers that makes a vast difference in homes and communities by making the message relevant to the Black man's plight.

The reason the Black church has always operated under travail is because the liberation struggle was initiated by institutionalized racism, and society devalued the Black man's conscious and their coinage of moral and spiritual leadership. The Black church, especially the African Methodist Episcopal Church has given its people a far reaching opportunity to emerge from the struggle of injustice that has hindered empowerment, by encouraging higher academic achievement (college plus years), within the confines of its leadership.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church movement still presents many challenges in its ministerial role. Because of the existence of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, it has provided an opportunity for people to accept life's challenges and grow. The message of a liberating gospel has spread via African Methodism and it still stands strong, however, there is great disparity in the growth of such a powerful movement. The disparity is the result of the church becoming selfish with sharing its blessings that truly aid in fulfilling the needs of their brothers and sisters that enable us to walk freely. The Black church in the African American experience faces many crises due

to systemic problems designed by rulers of darkness and principalities that sits in high places. Therefore, it creates and negates upward mobility among African Americans who are striving to reach socio-economic power.

To continue engaging in Black liberation, the church must become obligated and faithful in providing the necessary resources that will direct its people to obtain an education. In the past, Black church leaders encouraged and implemented educational programs of self-help and self-determination. We must continue to encourage our people to stay focused on obtaining the essential tools through the word of God to become liberated, and those who feel they have made it, it is time to reach out to help somebody rise above the conditions that keep God's people bound. The question still persists, how are we responding to the needs of the African American plight. Christ did not come to save a society but to redeem individuals from the curse of sin. He declared, in the end, nations would be judge largely on the basis of their treatment of those who were less privileged.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church's role in Black liberation is the Black church finest hour, because the Black church experience has brought a social, economic, and political revolution that stirred a spiritual uprising. For the spiritual revolt precedes all other evolution.

The ashes has longed settled since the planned insurrection by Denmark Vesey and others. Did true justice prevail? Were the accused given a fair trial? We only have as proof what was written and documented by those who served as judge and jury during those two hot weeks in July before Denmark Vesey and his accusers were taken one by one to the gallows to be hung.

Our current situation in Charleston: The racial /ethnic makeup of Charleston is 52.2% White, 41.1% African American, 1.6% Asian and 4.4% are Hispanic and Latinos of any race according to the US Census 2012. The historical population growth from 1790 to 2012 was from 16,359 to 125,583. Today Charleston is known as The Holy City, perhaps by virtue of the prominence of churches on the low-rise cityscape, perhaps because like Mecca, it devotees hold it so dear, perhaps because Carolina was among the few original colonies to provide toleration for all Protestant religions, through it was not opened to Roman Catholics.¹²

Today, the Port of Charleston, is owned and operated by the South Carolina Ports Authority and is known as one of the largest ports in the United States. The current Port now consists of five terminals in spite of labor disputes, which occur occasionally, the port is ranked number one in customer satisfaction.

Through the fight of many Civil Rights activist, we no longer have to deal with slavery and segregation, we have a right to fight for equal rights and demand equality across the board. But the question remains, are we truly liberated, are we really free? We have been loosed from bondage, but have willingly enslaved ourselves to gangs, alcohol, drug addiction, drug abuse, prostitution, and welfare. We have chosen to drop out of school to sell drugs, to murder and steal.

In concluding this chapter, I remember singing a song when attending elementary school at Mayesville Institute School.

Freedom is a word often heard today, but if you want to keep it there's a price to pay. Each generation got to win it anew, 'cause it's not something handed down to you. Freedom Isn't Free, Freedom Isn't Free, You've got to pay a price, you've got to sacrifice, for your liberty. There was a General by the name of George, with a

¹² "Charleston South Carolina," accessed May 7, 2014, <http://www.charleston-sc.gov/index.aspx?nid=110>.

small band of men at Valley Forge, left the comfort of home for cold and ice, they won independence for they paid the price. Freedom Isn't Free, Freedom Isn't Free you've got to pay a price, you've got to sacrifice, for your liberty.

Demark Vesey. His is a face that we cannot see, but that is always with us.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Sound theology, and sound preaching go hand in hand. Edward said, “Resolved: to study the scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find and plainly perceive myself to grow on the knowledge of the same.”¹ Theology authenticates and acknowledges the core of scriptures. Theology is to explicate the meaning of God’s liberating activity so that those who labor under enslaving power will see that the forces of liberation are the activity of God himself. Theology supports the struggles for justice, freedom, and human dignity in times past.

A. H. Strong describes theology as the science of God and of the relations between God and the universe. Charles Hodge wrote that theology is the science of the facts of divine revelation so far as those facts concern the nature of God and our relation to Him, as His creatures, as sinners, and as the subjects of redemption. The book of 2 Timothy 3:15 records, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Paul points out that there is an element of work involved in handling the word of truth. Theology is the word that describes that work of handling the word of truth. For

¹ Jonathan Edwards, “The Resolutions: Center for Reformed Theology,” accessed October 15, 2014, www.reformed.org.

Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of Yahweh, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, Solomon the great philosopher of the Old Testament sought to find peace apart from God, found himself in a dark philosophical world, but in the end, he realizes that we are to remember our Creator while we are young, and to find life's meaning in relationship with Him.

It is my intent as I prepare myself through the teaching and preaching of God's words to remember God's greatest commandment to love. As I guide my congregants and community through the spiritual process, it is imperative that I incorporate love and wisdom as I teach an understanding of the scriptures through theology and philosophy.

What then is love and wisdom? Most people are aware that the term is derived from two Greek words: Philo (love) and Sophia (wisdom). Philosophy, then, literally means "the love of wisdom." Although there are many different ideas about wisdom, we can define it as the proper understanding about the nature of reality. The wise person then has a correct understanding about his/her own nature, the nature of the universe, and the nature of God (if, in fact God actually exists). This understanding at the same time informs and influences the way he/she lives his/her life. A person is wise, in other words, if he/she has a correct understanding about how things actually are and the lives his/her life accordingly.²

Not only must I demonstrate love, I must be prepared to give godly judgments carried out with love and wisdom. I must be willing to walk upright leading the congregants with the love and wisdom demonstrated by Christ.

² Molloy College Department of Philosophy, "What Is Philosophy Anyway?" accessed October 24, 2014, www.molloy.edu.

The Greek philosopher Pythagoras, for example, maintained that unlike other human beings who are concerned with the hustle and bustle of life, the philosopher seeks for truth. The aim of philosophy, however, is not this truth or that truth, my truth or your truth, but “The Truth.” The truth that a philosophy search for is truth that applies to all people at all times. This truth has been referred to as a transcendent truth, because it is not restricted to the individual perceptions of what is true or false. Therefore, I must be an example of the truth while establishing effective ministries through discipleship.

Faith is to believe, faith can also refer to the body of beliefs. Believing is intellectual in the sense that faith has to have some facts to rest upon. We must believe what God says in His word. Faith then is defined in a practical way in Hebrews 11:1, “The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith offers hope. When theology and philosophy is beyond our understanding, one can always stand on faith gained through an uneventful experience where the wonderful and miraculous ways of God is revealed.

Teaching occurs through the word of God as one learns the nature of Christ and His expectations of us, then the needs are assessed and addressed through various ministries. Teaching and learning occurs in traditional congregational settings through many facets of the Church. These facets include, tithing, worship and liturgy, pastoral care, religious education, discipleship, preaching, church administration, and leadership through various ministries. It is the responsibility of the pastor to ensure that the congregation has a full knowledge of these facets, as they are the tools that will help to shape and build a stronger foundation for the church of tomorrow.

James Harris in his book *Pastoral Theology* focuses on encouraging the pastor to move out from the walls of the sanctuary into the community as he also presents a challenge to Black pastors to reexamine the gospel message. Harris also suggest that we go further than encouraging people to accept Jesus, but to enable them to become whole persons who are free and equal and no longer bound by poverty or oppression.

In his views on church administration, Harris states that church administration in the broad sense is everything the church does from managing the budget, developing tithing and stewardship theology, program planning, and office management to preaching on Sunday morning.³ He furthers states that the theology of church administration should seek to employ and or accentuate political activism and encourages a new self-esteem and self-help that is needed to bring change to liberating communities through ministries and discipleship.

Throughout his book, Harris presents a challenge for the pastor through the Black church to expand its ministries into the community. To develop teaching ministries that emphasizes self-help through Christian education, and the building of self-esteem, beginning with the pastor who must first believe in his ability to lead the people and then the people would create a very self-sufficient church and community.

Ministries and discipleship should go hand in hand, not one versus the other. Scriptures have proved that it is very important that people to whom Christ ministered were taught first. A person making the decision concerning discipleship should be taught the way; before they can understand spiritual experience.

³ James H. Harris, *Pastoral Theology: A Black-Church Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 71.

Theology is the study of God and His relationship to or with His people and their situation. We must, therefore, view the subject as it relates to theology, focusing on the understanding of God, changes, and teachings. This type of theology is referred to as theology proper, along with discipleship as we learn of the existence and the person-head of God as we role model the life of Christ and meet the needs of His people.

Many churches have not committed themselves to fulfilling its mission outside the sanctuary. Traditionally, it is the belief of church members that the church is to serve only those who are members and connected to the faith. In his book, *Leading Beyond the Walls*, Adam Hamilton encourages church leaders and pastors to go into the community, build relationships with the unchurched, and care for those who are hurting.⁴ In light of these findings, it is alarming to report that there are still a large number of churches that have not engaged in the context in order to move fluently into the theology of care. As we move from within the walls, we must meet the needs of those who are hurting where they are, and demonstrate the love and care of Jesus Christ as summarized in Matthew 9:35-38.

This pastor throughout his early ministry has always been plagued by one question, and that is, how could a denomination that is so well structured in the context of discipleship and ministry training still be so far from reaching beyond its walls. Growing up in rural Mayesville, South Carolina, I would drive my father around as he performed his duties as a class leader (one chosen by the pastor to assist in the mission and ministries of the church) assessing the needs of his class members and their spiritual life. I observed then, but now am able to have a clearer understanding, that due to the lack of

⁴ Adam Hamilton, *Leading Beyond the Walls: Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Unchurched* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 17.

training in the area of discipleship, it was difficult to transform the teaching and ministries beyond the walls of the church. The theology of inclusiveness was never demonstrated. Whenever asked, what are we doing to help the community, the response would always be directed to the Missionary Department, who would give assistance as requested. This created the theology of limitation in my context. Their limitation was not one of intentions, but of the lack of proper training. The younger generation would be viewed as “trying to tear up the church for the community,” because of a concern in my context, they would often be viewed as church dividers.

In the book *Evangelism Where you Live: Engaging your Community*, the authors engage the church in a question and answer survey. They asked questions like, can you imagine the community in which you live being genuinely thankful for your church. Can you imagine city leaders valuing your church’s friendship and participating in the community? Can you imagine a large number of your members actively engaged in, and abilities in ways at levels, they never thought possible? Can you imagine the spiritual harvest that would naturally follow if all this were true?⁵ It is imperative to answer the survey as correctly as possible to ensure that positive changes are done. Church and community leaders must be trained and equipped to accomplish our Lord’s purpose. It is then obvious that our communities have for decades looked to the church for directions, leadership, and interactions.

It is therefore, my prerogative to support my theological issues, which will give helpful insights in addressing my present context at the Greater Saint Luke African

⁵ Stephen Pate and Gene Wilkes, *Evangelism Where You Live: Engaging Your Community* (St. Louis, MO: TCP Books, 2008), 10.

Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Now let us examine this biblical theological pericope that is noted in the Old Testament book of Exodus 18:13-26, “The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening.

When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.” Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way are to live and how they are to behave, But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.” Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times.

The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. This text challenges us to instruct those who are experiencing difficult moments, and offer positive hope and changes that will impact their future development.

In his book, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, the author states that the roots of biblical discipleship goes deep into the fertile soil of God's calling. That calling is expressed into the pattern of divine initiative and human response that constitutes the heart of the biblical concept of covenant, manifested in the recurring promise "I'll be your God and you be my people."⁶ God's people are consistently reminding us throughout the scriptures that the law of God is everlasting for His people. This love is capable of relieving His people from their deplorable state and make available God's principles—to them and their descendants.

This message of promise creates an allegiance to Christ and His redemptive works along with our personal commitment to the care of discipleship. However, when we fail to carry out and participate in the Great Commission, we fail to serve the present age. This message was relevant to the life of Moses' leadership abilities as judge and Israel's leader. The Israelites were experiencing difficulty in comprehending and understanding how deep the root of God's love and promise beyond the law and ordinance was. However, Moses was to remind them of God's willingness to bring them into a covenant relationship with Him. It is now left to Moses to teach the Israelites the laws of God, which connects them with His recurring promise, I'll be your God, and you will be my people walking in my ways. Once the law and ordinance were taught, Israel would be in a position to move into another area of growth. The Israelites would often get into

⁶ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1996). Discipleship.

quarrelsome issues, which Moses had to execute the law and offered corrections. This task was overwhelming to Moses and began to cause some discomfort in his life and his mental state.

Christine M. Anderson in her writing, *Life Together: Reclaiming the Ministry of Small Groups*, has touched the life and ministries of millions who were in the trenches of discipleship and training. The author states, perfect community is to be found at the intersection of the two segments of the cross, where those who are reconciled with God are reconciled together—where we love God with all we have, and love our neighbors as ourselves. It is the place of transformation. The author further states that as society has become increasingly fragmented, we have moved from a culture rooted in community connectedness to what author Cornel West calls a *hotel society*; a society where one may live in the company of others, but the connections are tenaciously superficial and unrelentingly transitory.⁷

So, Moses' father in law Jethro saw him struggling, he said, you need to discover a more structured way to lead and teach these people. Invite capable, trained, and godly men and assign them to the areas that need constant leadership. These men assisted Moses in judging and leading God's people. In this biblical and theological pericope, he theologially states that when you follow the divine order of God's command, you can endure to a peaceful ending as well as the people in which you are leading.

Matthew 10:5-8, which is consider to be a biblical theology related to the issue of discipleship and training says, these twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost

⁷ Michael J. Christensen and Carl E. Savage, *Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 49.

sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: The kingdom of heaven has come near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”

Within my context it is imperative for those in the world of Christendom to realize that discipleship requires extraordinary response and allegiance to God. This allegiance develops a sincere obedience to Christ, and a commitment to the cross. Christ used people who were willing to submit themselves to the call of discipleship. The author William Barclay stated that Jesus was like a general sending his commanders out on a campaign, with instructions. Jesus is a teacher sending students out into the world, equipped with his teaching and His message.⁸ This message would result in spreading the Good News of Christ in remote and forbidden areas, to people who bitterly oppress the gospel of Jesus, yet with limitations to the Gentiles, and the Samaritans, but not the Galileans, which was open for the gospel.

The *Journal of Christian Education* 2013, published by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, one writer has raised some theological awareness as it relates to discipleship, a synonym for Christian living. This writer offers ten recommendations as it relates to effective discipleship. His point regarding the phases of discipleship as it relates to the church caught my attention. He stated, we need to think in term of two phases of making disciples, rather than the distinct task of evangelism and discipleship. He further explains that many often reflect on how they were evangelized—which could probably be discipling in the context of a loving family or community of believers until we publically confess and trust in the gospel we have seen lived out in others. The writer further offers

⁸ William Barclay, *Gospel of Matthew*, *New Daily Study Bible* Revised ed., vol. 2 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 419.

that we should make our congregations places where disciple making goes on as a normal part of the church's life.⁹

The lack of discipleship, teaching, and training in the area of discipleship can raise some theological issues. There should be no speculations concerning one's knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and their comprehension of the journal of discipleship. We can easily assess wrongly one's knowledge based on the assumptions that they are operating in the area of discipleship. This is quite observant in the lives of new believers. According to 1 Corinthians 3:1-7, they must first be fed the spiritual diet. Again, the lack of teaching and training in the areas of discipleship can indeed raise some theological issues. These issues can be dealt with as long as evangelism and discipleship are not taught as a single model.

Kevin E. Ruffcorn, states in his book *Rural Evangelism, Catching the Vision* that evangelism is the proclamation of the Good News, both inwardly and outwardly, by word and action in an intentional and relational manner. However, it is the Lord's desire through discipleship, His people are to grow in His likeness and offer positive changes in the lives of His people. When this is carried out, the Gospel will transform all whose heart can be reached.¹⁰ These issues are prevalent in the lives of our people that can succumb in the area of discipleship due to the lack of faith and the relentless need to conform. We must seek to transform the thoughts from individualism to productivity

⁹ Stephen Smallman, "Discipleship, A Synonym for Christian Living," *The Journal of Christian Education*, (Summer 2013): 4-7.

¹⁰ Kevin E. Ruffcorn, *Rural Evangelism Catching the Vision* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1994), 20.

through discipleship. We must transform the hearts and minds of those in pursuit of becoming doctors of the church.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran theologian, anti-Nazi dissident became actively involved in the ecumenical movement and accumulated international content to support him in the resistance. He also rejected the racist actions of the Nazi regime. Bonhoeffer became famous in the Christian German community as he took a traditional viewpoint challenging the Jewish Christian community. He argued that they must ultimately accept Jesus as the Messiah.

He also taught at Finkenwalde, a confessing church seminary and he trained clergy for the Confessing Church although the regime declared training to be illegal, and closed the seminary. However, arrests were made against his students, while he fled to Germany. Bonhoeffer was persistent in his belief. "It is only because He became like us that we can become like Him." Moreover, as a classic theologian, Bonhoeffer has enlightened the teaching of discipleship as being costly. He supports his belief in the Jewish Christians that Jesus is the Messiah. He challenged the governing authority that the teaching of the Confessing Church was essential in the life of Christendom.

St. Augustine of Hippo, the great doctor of the church was no stranger to the conversion process that leads to discipleship in Christ. One of the most telling aspects of his confessions was the importance of the virtue of charity. It was because of charity that he came to know God's love for him and that he was entering into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through an eternal light of truth that he came to know the reality of Jesus Christ. Authentic discipleship is rooted in the ability to love and show mercy to your fellow human beings. St. Augustine knew that the journey towards

discipleship was not an insistent preacher, yet the preacher could gradually lead one toward conversion and the acceptance of Christ. However, Paul words are similar to that of Augustine calling discipleship a process of forming not from a point of self-fulfillment, but the knowledge that our hope lives because of Christ and his church.

John Wesley, the founder and father of Methodism accredited his knowledge and mannerism as *Folk Theology* to the early developmental theology of his mother. He had faith that connects with the actual spiritual and human needs of God's people. John was influential in developing the theology of his brother Charles, and Methodist evangelist/preacher George Whitefield as men with a burning passion for connecting God's love, wisdom, power, and redemption to people at their point of need.

John was one of the very few in his day to be God's instrument to connect with those who were considered the less fortunate. Many who have not been able to be reached, were ushered into the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Because of his theological beliefs and practices, many were able to rise above degrading life-style. Wesley was able to develop a unique theological view from the Calvinist approach and the Catholic approach in the teaching and training of God's people. Calvinist placed much emphasis on what God require for His people, and if they rebel, what would take place. Wesley saw these theological practices as focusing on the basic activities of living life. Therefore, Wesley combined Calvinism and the Catholic approach as he reached out and offered prevenient grace while we were yet sinners.

Richard Allen's theology involved liberation. Allen was instrumental in the founding and establishing of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He was born into slavery and sold to a farm near Doves Delaware. Allen converted to Methodism at the

age of seventeen, bought his freedom as well as his brother's, and was able to teach himself to read and write. After receiving his freedom, Allen worked odd jobs to make an honest living. He joined Saint George's Methodist Episcopal Church, as an ecumenical worshipper when he was permitted to assist the minister in teaching and preaching to Blacks.

In the Eighteenth Century, the Methodist movement grew tremendously due to Allen's preaching and teaching. Allen needed a larger place to continue the growth of the church; therefore, he requested that the trustees provide a separate place for worship for his brothers and sisters. This raised the level of quarrelsomeness that would start a movement of educating Blacks. The request was denied and a balcony was constructed, which became the new seating arrangement for Blacks and they were no longer allowed to sit with whites. Allen like Wesley wanted the people to place emphasis on their life living that they might satisfy the requirements of God. He was not happy with the challenges that faced his people with so many limitations and restrictions. This act of segregation caused a disturbance among Blacks. Allen and Absalom Jones founded and organized the Free African Society, a non-denominational religious mutual aid society whose primary purpose was to provide help and assistance for the Black community.

By offering help, it allowed Blacks to develop a sense of belonging and freedom, this opportunity also offered a sense of acceptance of the word of Christ. This gave them a brighter hope to be free one day. Allen began evangelizing and attracted criticism from local slave owners. Reverend Freeborn Garrettson, who had previously freed his own slaves, began to preach the same word that holding slaves against their will was not only a sin, but was ungodly. Sturgis soon was convinced that slavery was wrong and offered

his slaves an opportunity to purchase their freedom. Allen was a man of character and courage, who wanted his people to be treated with the same kind of fairness of the white race.

Allen grew up during the American Revolution; an era characterized by the advocacy of individual rights, the growth of denominational Christianity, and the inception of the anti-slavery movement. He continued to contribute to his belief in liberation theology by leaving the Saint George Methodist Episcopal Church and establishing the African Methodist Episcopal Church with much turmoil. The African Methodist Episcopal Church continue to fight injustice, poverty, crime, domestic violence, jobless, poor health care, better education in our school and equal rights for all. Allen remained faithful to the call of God in liberating his people from the hands of slavery to experiencing freedom.

One Sunday morning, after the construction of the balcony, the attendance was overflowing due to Allen's teaching and peaching. The Blacks were asked to leave their seats and go to the balcony. This unkind act caused a feeling of dehumanization and ungodliness. Nevertheless, they went developing the urgency for Black worshipper to pray for the spirit of God to intervene. Just as they began to kneel in prayer, they heard a soft voice saying let us pray, scuffling as well as low talking as Absalom Jones was being pulled from his knees by one of Saint George Methodist Church's trustees while he protested to wait until the prayer was over, but these officials refused to wait as he continued to affirm his position.

Allen, Jones, and every Black man, woman and children walked out of Saint George Methodist Episcopal Church and created the Free African Society. A few years

later the society was no longer serving its purpose. The people were led to purchasing land and erecting Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Many years have passed as the African Methodist Episcopal Church continues to serve its mission by responding to the physical, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating Gospel through worship and deed.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In our group “Growing a Church without Walls,” emerged a defining reason for slow and unproductive growth in the context of Greater St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. The church is located in the downtown area, north by Sunnyside Avenue to the south side of Mount Pleasant Street on the south from Grove Street, Dunneman Avenue. The eastern boundary is the west side of Rutledge Avenue and the western boundary is the Ashley River. The church sits on the edge of a historic district, surrounded by gourmet restaurants, convenient stores, a large park that offer vast activities during the week and weekends and in walking distance to the Citadel Military College.

The issue that confronts the context is that the African Methodist Episcopal Church has traditionally combined the training of evangelism and discipleship together as a single teaching model. This has been a detriment to the church, which has caused the church to minimize its spiritual maturity. If the church is to follow the Great Commission, it should identify what has caused the issue to be in existence. The context desires: 1) To develop strong ministries through discipleship training that will strengthen the community; and 2) To reach the unchurched and attenders and encourage them to enjoy the church’s amenities without constraints.

There is a great need for our churches to begin to explore our current teaching as a single model in the area of evangelism and discipleship. We have seen slow growth within the past ten years. This growth has been notable in the youth and young adult areas and could cause attention in our church and community. This project entails assessing the needs of the community, and offering seminars and training that will enhance balance among the church and community.

This project will address the members at the Greater St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church and encourage them to focus on their spiritual growth and maturity and review the manner in which they have been trained in the area of discipleship. In the meantime, the church must be taught discipleship as a single model, rather than the traditional teaching of evangelism and discipleship as single modules. Moreover, the teaching would be less confusing and offer a clearer view of the teaching and life of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The Holy Bible addresses two models that are related to discipleship. The first model is about those who are appointed by God because of their faithfulness in the areas of leadership and discipleship. God has called leaders to make disciples as well as reminding them of His commandments. Numbers 15:38-41 says, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. I am

the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord your God.”

They were to keep the commandments and also teach them to their children.

Deuteronomy 11:19-22 says, “Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children will be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow—to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience and to hold fast to Him.”

It was Jesus who gave the prerequisites in the New Testament of what it means to be a disciple and to experience moments of self-denial as found in Luke 9:23; “Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” Most importantly, those whom Christ calls, He prepares for service, leadership, and the wisdom of diligence. Discipleship is more than being a follower of Christ or modeling after Christ. It is assisting in spreading and teaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, and helping others to take the next step in their faith practice. The Bible offers guidelines in making disciples. This process mandates us to read the Holy Word, and pray daily for strength and Christian growth.

The second model of discipleship is where Almighty God allows God’s chosen leader to delegate authority along with the enlargement of the territory. Moses had experienced a moment of fatigue as he served as judge of God’s people teaching them of His laws and stature. If discipleship is to be effective, we must express our desire to

connect with others. As a disciple, one must realize “that in order to drive people to action, you must first move them with emotions,” as stated by John C. Maxwell in his book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Law number ten, the Law of Connection.¹

God has often given directions to those who were allowed to have others to participate in the process. Moses was directed to search for competent men who encircled him to be his assistants. The primary purpose of the recommendation was to be in a position to serve more people, as they were placed in groups; this gesture kept order and organization. As Moses served as judge, he was admonished to teach the people to follow the ordinances and laws of God. They were able to trust God continuously who brought them out of Egypt.

During the last three years of Jesus’ ministry, He spent much time in teaching how one could become a disciple. He provided them with convincing and undisputable proof that He was the Son of the Most High God (Ex 18:21). Jesus shared with crowds and His disciples, teaching them the importance of His miracles, parables, and teachings. Upon sending them out, He reminded them that He would be returning to His father after His death and resurrection (Mt 16:21, Jn 12:23-24, 14:2-4). It takes faith along with hard work to allow transformation in the area of discipleship to spread or spill over into the community. God has given power through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to those who are willing and faithful.

The need for disciples is in great demand. Our world is being challenged by the selfish arbitration and systematic problems designed by the leaders of our time. The lack of morals and character has escaped the minds and hearts of the people of our day, people

¹ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), 115.

are hurting and dying from various conditions, they are in desperate need. The book of Ezekiel 34:2-5 says, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them, ‘this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. They were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals.’” Matthew 9:35-38 says, “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

Steven Pate and Gene Wilkes, expressed my sentiment in their book “*Evangelism Where You Live, Engaging Your Community*” as the authors stress the importance of “the second part of the Great Commission—that is equipping—is as crucial for the individual and the ekklesia as the reaching aspect of our co-mission with Christ Jesus.” As we begin to equip people for service, our purpose should be to demonstrate and show the love of God through Jesus Christ that lives in us and compels us to love one another. When we reach out to others, the grace of God is then activated as we give God honor and glory. It is through discipleship and teaching that people grow in the knowledge of God.²

² Steve A Pate and C. Gene Wilkes, *Evangelism Where You Live: Engaging Your Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008), 86.

Institutions for years have been teaching people how to become Christ-like without ever sharing with them this attribute and His teaching. Like Matthew, a disciple of Christ, after accepting his calling, immediately began to practice discipleship by inviting the disciples and others into his home. This manner was to show that we are to make disciples for the Kingdom of God. Matthew had to demonstrate what it was like to be a disciple and to spread the love of Christ through service. As the church, we must focus on the life of Christ and how He purposefully and equally involved every moment to share with people of all walks of life that God loves them. The transforming aspect that lies between institutions and communities can be done if the Great Commission is to be understood.

Robert Lewis, pastor of Little Rock Fellowship Bible Church discovered through a Community Research Model, that people are actually looking for the church to be more involved in the community. Lewis also discovered that the people in Little Rock were confused and wondered why churches and institutions were not an active part of the Little Rock community. Traditionally, if the community did not come to church, the church would not go to the community. Transforming churches into the community can happen if the church presents itself to the community as an agent of change that impacts the community. The Lord's church must listen to the words of Jesus as they are written in John 4:35b, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." Jesus admonishes the Church and Community to become connected and share the same common interest.

Pastor Randy Pope of Perimeter Church in Atlanta Georgia, describes a disciple and a follower of Christ who: 1) Lives consistently under the control of the Holy Spirit,

the direction of the word of God, and the compelling love of Jesus Christ; 2) Has discovered, developed, and is using his or her spiritual gifts; 3) Has learned to effectively share his or her faith journey while demonstrating radical love that amazes the community of faith; 4) Is an effective teacher, manager of life, relationship and resources; and 5) Demonstrates a life characterized by the gospel of Jesus Christ, worship focused, morally pure, evangelistically bold, and discipleship grounded family and friend socially responsible and committed.³

Discipleship should be offered to all with intent to follow after the teaching of Christ within the context of the Great Commission. This model was successful because it allowed the church and the community to connect and grow in the likeness of Christ. Pope, a church planter and community reformer has a passion and commitment for making disciples. He and his church have partnered with over 120 churches from various denominations working collaboratively together in order to bring the kingdom, church, and community into transformation. To support commonality, he has written a three-year missional discipleship curriculum entitled “The Journey” and developed effective tools used throughout the United States and abroad in support of evangelism and discipleship.

Tom Holladay, associate senior pastor of Saddleback Church (Rick Warren, Founder/Senior Pastor) has published “Eight Laws for Spiritual Growth.” In the article, he offers eight core principles that are used as a discipleship model at Saddleback Church. Their discipleship process is based on the belief that the main focus should be on the people and not the church. Through a study, Pastor Rick Warren identified these eight laws for spiritual growth. 1) Spiritual growth is intentional; 2) Spiritual growth is incremental; 3) Spiritual growth is personal; 4) Spiritual growth is practical; 5) Spiritual

³ Pate and Wilkes, *Evangelism Where You Live*, 87.

growth is relational; 6) Spiritual growth is multidimensional; 7) Spiritual growth is seasonal; and 8) Spiritual growth is incarnational.

Spiritual growth in the context should not be accidental; one's growth must be intentional, along with being committed. We must encourage people to be more than followers, but to eventually become disciples. It is through discipleship and community interactions that committed people move into the core of service and spiritual growth. Spiritual growth in incremental stages should be implemented in order to aid in helping individuals become stronger in faith as a disciple. This will help the individual to develop and grow into a relationship with Christ. Spiritual growth is personal.

It is very important to treat every individual based on need and maturity in implementing discipleship training. We can no longer do mass training and continue with the mindset that one size is convenient for all. We are each uniquely made and not subjected to learn at the same pace or style. Spiritual growth is practical, in order to spread growth into the community, one must develop a practical style and practice in discipleship training, we must seek to become a habit, we must be contagious to the lives of others. Spiritual growth is relational; our growth can be effective if we connect with others is the communion of faith.

Many think that you can grow on your own. The fact is stated in Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching." Spiritual growth is multidimensional, we must consider as we grow in spirit, worship, fellowship, and discipleship that ministry and mission are vital in spreading community growth. Spiritual

growth is seasonal, it is very important in the lives of new and developed Christians to realize that no one can grow at a rapid pace all the times. There will be moments when constant growth will not take place, yet we should encourage those who are in progress that there will be times when the season of growth will fail.

Spiritual growth is incarnational, Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Spiritual growth is not about personal accomplishments, but about the person who has the presence of Christ inside of them.⁴

Dallas Willard in his book, *“The Great Omission, Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship,”* argues that the New Testament literature, must be allowed to define our terms, if we are to ever get our bearings in the way with Christ, which makes this clear. It is in that context, that we are able to see that disciples of Jesus are people who do not just profess certain views as their own, but apply them as they grow and understand life and the Kingdom of Heaven to every aspect on earth. Discipleship will never reach its full potential if we continue to omit the teachings that Christ has commanded for us in the Great Commission. He told us directly what to do to make disciples.⁵

Another model held in the likeness of making disciples is sometimes done through what Robert Schnase calls in his book, *“Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations,”* one of the five that captured my attention is radical hospitality, which is

⁴ Tom Holladay, “Eight Laws of Spiritual Growth” *Ministry Today* (Jan/Feb 2013), accessed November 13, 2014.

⁵ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 2006), xi.

simply being nice to people in general. We are to invite, welcome, receive and care for those who are strangers so that they can find spiritual purpose in life and be actively involved in the community, and experience the unending riches of a life in Christ Jesus.⁶ Before spiritual growth or discipleship can take place, God must be involved as one who knits and allows community involvement, as the good old church continues to help them to grow in faith, as they become the body of Christ.

There must be a willingness to change behaviors in order to accommodate the needs of those who are being disciples. All models should be in agreement that hospitality is a mark of Christian discipleship, a quality of the Christian community, a concrete expression of commitment to grow in Christ-likeness by seeing ourselves as disciples making disciples. By doing this, we will become a part of God's invitation in developing new life for the kingdom. One thing that we should keep in mind is that discipleship should be with no distinction and should be carried out regardless of our religious, social, or political preferences.⁷

Another model in discipleship that is prevalent in the life and mind of new believers is process versus perfection. This model can cause one to think that life should be lived to perfection. William D. Watkins in his book, *The Transforming Habits of a Growing Christian* feels that there is a misconception of the Christian life being a perfect life. Watkins declared that the Christian life is not perfect; it is a simple process. This problem is enhanced as we learn how to trust God over and over again. As we trust Him, our relationship will continue to grow and mature. Spiritual disciplines should involve

⁶ Robert Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 31.

⁷ Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, 12.

what the new believers are accustomed to hearing, running a spiritual marathon, and spiritual warfare. We most definitely can see spiritual transformation as growing with an understanding of Christ's love and His divine work in our lives to make us a better people. He then takes our good innate habits and transforms them into our newfound faith.

Individuals who are teaching in the areas of discipleship should possess a quality of love and obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. They must have walked with Jesus and have grown to spiritual maturity. This kind of growth and development can really encourage those who are growing to maturity to practice endurance to the end.⁸

Another model that connects leadership to discipleship can be found in the book authored by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges. The authors both agreed that before one can become a disciple, they must enter the journey from call to commission. Jesus calls ordinary people to be obedient and brought into a new life experience. Unlike the rest of the models, Blanchard and Hodges used more unique terms as they referenced different type of discipleship models such as novice, apprentice, journeyman, and master as learning stages.

Novices are the new believers, who are starting out as learners relying on the trainer to give directions. Apprentices are those who are in training on how to become a disciple and have not yet reached full potential but are programmable. As we train newcomers, we must keep in mind they are growing correctly in the knowledge of Christ. Jesus saw his disciples, when they were unsuccessful in casting out demons in Matthew 10:10-28 and in Matthew 17:15-16. The apprentice is described as not being fully

⁸ William D. Watkins, *The Transforming Habits of a Growing Christian* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2004), 43.

empowered. Through discipleship, the journeyman will develop some skills but have not come to full terms with discipleship. They rely on the discipleship teacher to assist them in their growth and developmental period. They can easily become preoccupied by the distraction of the non-believers. If the master teacher continues to be a positive role model and work with new believers, they will come to full maturity. They will also be in position to make other disciples.⁹

In the biblical context, a disciple means a follower of Christ, one who accepts and assists in the spreading the Good News, role modeling the life, ministry, and teaching of Christ. It is not fulfilled by anyone mentioned on their own, but by fellowship, accountability, evangelism, making converts, Bible study, training seminars, listening to sermons, and hanging out with mature believers. Jesus' ministry was holistic; it involved word, relationship, and ministries.

In Dietrich Bonhoeffer book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, he talks about a radical call to follow Christ. Sometimes following Christ can be risky and costly. Bonhoeffer reports that our churches are filled with a deadly enemy called cheap grace. Cheap grace can be a hindering factor for growth, development, and spiritual growth in our churches and communities. Bonhoeffer stated that cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheap Jack's wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away as cut pieces. Grace represents the church's inexhaustible treasure from which she showers blessings with generous hands without asking questions or fixing limits. Grace without price; grace without cost!

⁹ Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2005), 126-135.

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism, without church discipline, communion without confession, and absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross and grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. However, today we are fighting for costly grace. Costly grace is the gospel, which must be sought again, the gift, which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is costly because it cost a man His life, and it is grace because it gives a man only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin and justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of His Son.

Though each author presented different models as it relates to discipleship, teaching, and ministries, they all seek to address and explore the needs of spiritual growth, and community involvement. Each model supports the notion that discipleship begins at church and then spreads to the community. Traditionally, the church has interpreted human life including all of its suffering and pain. The convergence of discipleship principles with much effort can indeed bring on an integral relationship and growth in the life of believers.

In Dallas Willard's model, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, he lifted up a valid matter that have affected the life of discipleship for years; omitting the requirements that are spelled out in the Great Commission, to go out and make disciples. That was a direct order that is being taken very lightly in the religious arena. This area should be lifted high and strengthen.

The model used by Saddleback church has grown tremendously in many areas because of the development and practice of the eight laws for spiritual growth. These are

principles that can help as discipleship training is being implemented. These principles will also allow the non-believer to assess themselves during discipleship training and practice. Spiritual growth will take place because this model presents an un-institutionalized teaching that is conducive for growth and development.

The model presented by Robert Lewis is a community research model with people who were unchurched and had no foundational teaching in the area of discipleship, as they were confused and excluded from the church as a whole. This model presents a negative aspect on the church. Transforming discipleship teaching and training from within the wall of the church into the community can happen. The church must be a magnetic force to the community. The church must present herself as an agent of changes with intent to impact the community. This model research was done as a means of demonstrating that a community does not need a church to exist, and that the church needs the community to be a church. Discipleship is the process in which new believers begin to develop and grow in Christ. The Holy Spirit will help prepare them to become like Christ. This is projected from a Christian setting and not from a community research model.

We must keep in mind that at the end of the training, a deeply rooted and committed disciple of Jesus Christ will be added to the list. John Wesley summarized the Great Commandment by saying that Christians are those who have a unique way of expressing their love and service to God with their head, heart, and hands.¹⁰ If we are to love God, we should have a developed knowledge of who God is, we should be unwavering in our belief as we offer support in the development of discipleship. This supported belief includes reading and studying the Bible and loving God with our all. We

¹⁰ Adam Hamilton, *Leading Beyond the Walls* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 64.

should have a strong affirmation if we are to make disciples, we should encourage them to think in terms of making other disciples.

To love and serve God with our heart is to welcome cultivation to shape our personal relationship with Christ, as we are being trained and developed. This work is done as we pray, read, worship, and have openness and a desire to be led by the Holy Spirit daily. John Wesley calls it a holiness of heart or being made perfect in law, which is also a fundamental part of God's love.

For decades, institutions have been projecting a teaching to its people on how to become like Christ without ever sharing with them His attribute, and His teaching. Moreover, the church should strive to become a vital and living organism in the lives of humankind as well as in the life of the community. It is advisable that the teachers and new believer have a clear view on how Christ wants disciples made (Mt 28:19). If this is to be considered our goal, it is imperative that we produce well trained, spirit filled, and lead disciples that are ready to make other disciples.

Finally, loving God with our hands and our neighbors as ourselves has always been a building block of demonstrating the love and care of God for humanity. Our Christian services became known as we addressed and met the needs of hurting people, ministering within and without the church to help design a model that would help produce spiritual growth and maturity in the lives of God's people through discipleship, meeting the needs of the people where they are.

The church is a continuation of what Christ did during his earthly ministry. We must continue to use universal language that can be clearly understood. We are in two realities, living here on earth and traveling to another world. The needs of both must be

addressed and placed in context. As we teach discipleship through training, we must realize that it is simply teaching others about Jesus Christ and His will for our lives. As I listen to the news at the rapidness of crimes in the Charleston County area, from burglaries, to gun violence, to domestic violence to child abduction, the need for transforming Greater St. Luke to a church without walls through discipleship and self-help ministries is even more prevalent. The need to bring this project to fruition is at hand.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

This research is designed to support the theory that discipleship and evangelism should be taught as a single module. Traditionally, the African Methodist Episcopal Church has been teaching discipleship and evangelism as a single and combined model, which has caused a detriment in our church. If discipleship teaching is done in a single model, it will prove to be more effective than that of the traditional teaching of evangelism and discipleship together as a single model.

There is a great need for our church in the community to reach out beyond its walls and boundaries and spill over into all the world. This includes ministering to the total church; the physical, spiritual, mental, and environmental needs of the community. This will allow the congregation an opportunity to reach out beyond its walls to address the needs of those who are not connected to the traditional Sunday morning fellowship, thus making us accountable and proving that we are good neighbors thorough the commandment of God that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. Therefore, the process will also include assessing the needs of the community by offering seminars that will enhance unity among the church and the community, and showing that the church is the community.

Through the years, the church has experienced a decline in membership due to the combined training in the area of discipleship and evangelism. Therefore, there is an essential need to strengthen the aforementioned ministries, which will in turn strengthen spiritual growth and development. Due to limited resources, the church is the only vehicle of support many have to depend on. It is imperative that the church is trained and ready to meet the needs of the people as they present themselves. Discipleship is modeling and teaching the basic principles on how to become a Christian and reaching out and spreading the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Discipleship means demonstrating the Christ-like love for those who lost their sense of being, by taking the message of hope to all and rejoicing when one has received the plan of salvation through the teaching of the Word. Next is a descriptive use of the ministries of evangelism and discipleship.

Evangelism

Evangelism is the announcement, proclamation, and preaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is also the practice of relaying information about a particular set of beliefs to others with the intention to offer conversion and radical change. Luke 8:12-56 shows how Jesus brought good news, He not only preached, He demonstrated His power over forces of nature in saving his fearful and faithless disciples. He used His mighty power to cast out demonic spirits from helpless people, healed without medicine and brought salvation through the preaching of the gospel. It is through evangelism that people are called to respond to the message of grace and commit themselves to God in Christ Jesus.

In his book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Robert E. Coleman argues that the church has obviously failed tragically. Many are talking about evangelism and Christian nurture, but have not successfully instructed new converts to follow the example of Christ Jesus. New converts are not being properly trained due to such haphazard matters. We have lost the glow of our Christian experience and so fewer have grown in the knowledge of Christ and His kingdom. We must continue to develop young converts into mature Christian disciples.¹

Giving personal care to every believer is the only way to adequately access what is needed in the world of evangelism. Every individual should be treated with ecclesiastical respect. If this is done, then the new convert will feel a sense of belonging and inclusiveness, yet, we should provide quality training that will enable them to become equipped with the necessary tools that will assume their followership in Christ Jesus.

In his book *The Unchurched Next Door*, the author Thomas S. Rainer gave a few reasons as to why we have not reached the unchurched because we have developed a lack of spiritual growth, inevitably have led to share Christ with others. We have developed what Rainer calls “spiritual lethargy,” this syndrome develops when we fail to obey the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is impossible for us to grow spiritually when we habitually disrespect and not obey the direct command of God and have failed to make disciples and witnesses that brings us in a form of Christian disobedience can hinder spiritual growth which leads to a diminished desire to share Christ with others.² As

¹ Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (San Francisco, CA: Fleming H. Revell, 2010), 49.

² Thom S. Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages as Keys to Sharing Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 2008), 217.

leaders in the 21st Century in the area of evangelism, it is imperative that we keep two words in mind as we attempt to evangelize God's people. Those two words are proclamation and affirmation.

In his book, *Evangelism as a Lifestyle; Reaching into Your World with the Gospel*,³ Jim Petersen supports the fact that the proclamation of the gospel is an action through which non-Christians are instructed about the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is done in the area of reconciliation to God through preaching, teaching, radio and television broadcast. The Bible encourages us to proclaim the gospel to all the world and to all the people whether through teaching and preaching. There is another form of evangelism that is most helpful and significant in reaching the people of God. That mode is affirmation of the gospel. This is a unique method of incarnating and demonstrating the message of Christ. These people are depending and looking for someone to give coherence and direction to their lives.³

There are two modes of evangelism, proclamation, and affirmation that are essential in the lives of new converts and those from a non-Christian environment. The gospel must be proclaimed to all through our daily newspaper, newscast, public preaching, individuals, and person-to-person persuasion.

Discipleship

Discipleship calls for one to be brought in a relationship and to accept and learn how to be obedient, and a follower of Jesus Christ. We as believers of the faith must train and make ready those who are willing to model the teaching and the basic principles on

³ Jim Petersen, *Evangelism as a Lifestyle: Reaching Into Your World with the Gospel* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1982), 42.

how to become a Christian, and reaching out and spreading the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Discipleship is to demonstrate the Christ-like love, attitude and behavior in the presence of those who have lost their hope and since of being.

In his book, the author Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes that if we continue to preach forgiveness without repentance, baptism along with discipleship, we are providing cheap grace. This cheap grace is grace without Jesus Christ and moreover, without the gospel. This teaching and grace is costly, because it challenges us to follow the teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Bonhoeffer, also stated that such a grace is costly because it causes humankind his life and it offers humankind the only true life; it condemns sin, and brings justification in the life of the sinner. Discipleship should be a daily process with a robust plan in meeting and addressing the condition of God's people and offering positive changes as they work out their souls' salvation as they grow in the knowledge of grace, the believers must make an effort to grow and develop a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.⁴

As Jesus was preparing to leave this earth to return to heaven, He gave His disciples marching orders, to go make disciples. This is to be done by baptizing, teaching, and being obedient as followers of Jesus Christ. Colonel Janet Munn, Secretary for Spiritual Life Development for the International Salvation Army, offers four essential components of discipleship: Mentoring and Role Models, Small Group Participation, Personal Spiritual Ministry, and Mission Opportunities. She further explains that the evidence of Jesus' life through leadership, relationship and people grow as a result of good relationship.

⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Cost of Discipleship," *Christian History* 10, no. 4 (1991): 28

1. **Mentoring and Role Models** — Matthew 9:9-10 says, “As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth, “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. Jesus made Himself available, accessible to the needs of His people. He led by precepts and by example. He was their mentor and role model.
2. **Small Group Participation** — Individuals often grow through small group participation, sharing a common likeness. Jesus used this model for disciple making and even with the twelve disciples. Matthew 5:1-2 reports, “Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.” He [Jesus] used this context, because it really works in developing the new converts into Christian disciples.
3. **Personal Spiritual Ministry** — Growth is essential through one’s personal and spiritual life. They should involve themselves in the giving and receiving through prayer, teaching and the preaching of the gospel. John 13:1-5 reveals, “Jesus knew that the hour had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God; so He got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.” It was His [Jesus] ultimate choice not to receive or give a personal spiritual ministry. He integrated prayer and scripture for His life living, and through His ministry, he implemented this effort to enhance discipleship growth and development is the believer.
4. **Mission Opportunities** — There are times when people really have to be involved in mission and in a position to respond to the call! People grow as they demonstrate unity and togetherness in assisting those who are suffering, and are having difficulties in their life. Luke 9:51 shows that Jesus was a missional man. In fact, He was the ultimate missionary. He taught His disciples to be and to do the same. When the popular thing to do was to respond to the demands of the multitudes, Jesus remained clear on His life’s mission and “steadfastly set His face” toward the cross—His mission focus.⁵

While evangelism offers the good news, discipleship brings people to spiritual maturity, and obedience. This has been a detriment to the Greater Saint Luke African

⁵ Janet Munn, “Four Essential Components of Discipleship,” *The Journal of Christian Education* 60, no. 4 (2014): 7 & 13.

Methodist Episcopal Church. It is my desire to strengthen ministries and develop self-help workshops that comes from the knowledge of discipleship and support ministries. The church has served as a model of teaching and learning through church school, Bible study, evangelism, discipleship, and other organizations.

There are opportunities for witnessing all around us. We have a responsibility to develop the alertness of mind and the desire to share God's love that will enable us to take advantage of every opportunity by which the Lord leads us day by day. We must study to develop a witnessing mindset, ever asking God to give us the ability and the knowledge to see the opportunity for evangelism which He brings into our path each and every day. We must ask God for a heart that is strong enough to use these opportunities for His glory.

Methodology

This researcher utilized the following tools in collecting information to support his research.

1. Survey Monkey
2. Interviews/Questionnaires
3. The Church web page and face book account

Questions using the Survey Monkey consist of the following methods: Likert Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Strongly Disagree, Multiple Choice and True and False. The surveyors were asked to give a brief statement on the definition of discipleship and evangelism, and if the terms were interchangeable. In addition to utilizing the survey

monkey, a handout was available for those members who were not technically knowledgeable so that all who desired to participate were given the opportunity.

The project implemented a training model through weekly Bible study and sermon series, which focused on the individual spiritual growth and development, and taught practical skills, which would be implemented and ensure that the members are growing spiritually. Listed each Sunday in the church worship guide, the question is asked, “How does the sermon, brings you closer to Christ?”

The project model provided for interviewing of the team of Context Associates to collect information regarding the spiritual growth of the Church. The following four questions were asked:

1. Have my teaching, ministry and preaching helped you to distinguish between evangelism and discipleship?
2. How has it helped you personally?
3. How do you feel about the growth of our church since I have been here?
4. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the growth of the church for the last forty-seven months?

The church web page was used as a tool to provide information to the community on self-help training and ministries, and face book account was used as a tool to reach out to the community by sharing portions of our services to relay a message of hope through evangelism and discipleship.

The above tools were choose to collect data for this research in helping to properly assess the spiritual growth of the congregants: 1) Are there any prerequisites in becoming a disciple? 2) Is there a certain gift that is needed to become a disciple? 3) How to develop skills and abilities if you don’t have them?

In using these tools, I sought to prove my theory that if the two [evangelism and discipleship] are taught as a single module they would prove to be more effective and beneficial to overall spiritual growth. Each tool used also gave the congregants and social media and opportunity to respond.

Implementation

The intent of this research was to transform the Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church through discipleship training ministries. The purpose of Matthew 28:16-20 was that Jesus wanted to do more than ministry, His plan was larger than that, His purpose after the appointment of the twelve was to build a movement; something that would catch on fire and burn for generations. The goal of this project was to build ministries and through discipleship training creating a positive surge that would burn for generations. The Ministries of Marriage, Prison, The Sons of Allen, Zwadi Passage of Rite along with the Steward Board discipleship training were used in this project. The ministries will be divided into two groups whose ultimate goal was to work collaboratively to meet a common goal. That goal was to develop strong ministries through discipleship training that would strengthen the community in teaching self-help skills that would strengthen homes, marriages, and children, and to build a bond between the prison and families left behind. The ultimate goal of these two entities were to reach the unchurched and those that are affiliated but are not members and strengthen the family bond by offering to them the opportunity to enjoy the same amenities, without constraints.

Therefore, this research developed the following ministries as a guide to strengthen the families of the congregation so that they might be able to differentiate between evangelism and discipleship as to properly instruct those that are lost as they brought back to the fold of God.

Marriage Ministry Mission Statement

The mission of the Marriage Ministry was to provide couples with biblical principles and life skills that would help them to establish and maintain healthy relationships by seeking to understand God's sovereign plan for marriage. The Marriage Ministry's aim was to teach and assist with development of marriage enrichment and communication skills, understand what the Bible says about marriage, participate in programs meetings and social events, attend workshops/seminars and coaching sessions, and annual honeymoon retreats. The ultimate mission of the Marriage Ministry was to focus on the good in all marriages; to empower all couples to have strong faith in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Expected Outcomes

- To help couples discover practical ways for building a passionate marriage relationship.
- Promote God's plan for marriage.
- Assist with physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of marriage from a biblical perspective.
- To provide tools to couples for improving their relationship with each other and with God.
- To nurture and fellowship with other Christian couples.

Outcomes

As a result of this ministry, this research has witnessed repairing of marriages, parents reaching out to their lost children, and husband and wives becoming a stronger union as they reach out one to another as they understand the teachings of evangelism and discipleship in bringing one or the other back to fold of Christ. Therefore, it is evident that I continue to teach evangelism and discipleship as a single module, it will continue to strengthen the bond of the families of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, therefore, making them more committed members.

Prison Ministry - Mission Statement

We do not take for granted that there are over 2 million people locked behind prison walls. We do not condemn those whose freedom has now been denied. Our friends, family, and neighbors have loved ones incarcerated in federal, state, and local facilities. It is our duty as believers to remember and care for individuals who have made mistakes in this drama we call life. We must remember the words of Jesus when he said “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Expected Outcomes

- Introducing the prisoners to Jesus Christ
- Helping them to function in the prison environment.
- Support the inmates’ families when feasible.

- Provide communication with the outside world.
- Prepare them for life after prison.
- Preparing them for Christ's return.

Outcomes

This ministry has only been able to reach one of its expected goals, which is to support the inmates' families when feasible. This goal was met using the Angel Tree Ministry, which affords local churches the opportunity to give gifts to the children of inmates in their behalf during incarceration. The remaining goals of this ministry were on hold due to the constraints of entering the prison facilities and getting the necessary clearance in order to obtain entry to the inmates. However, I will not stop until this goal is accomplished in order to first evangelize and to then teach discipleship to help inmates accomplish the other goals. If and when inmates are released back to their communities they would be released as God-fearing men and woman ready and willing for the workmanship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sons of Allen Zawadi Ministry - Mission Statement

The Rites of Passage program was a training program with a process that was meticulous. The rules and code of conduct are strict, graduation requirements are demanding and sessions are rigorous, fun, practical, participatory, honest, and confidential. We met the boys where they were, we engaged and challenge them, we helped them believe again, and most of all we ritualize their passage in a community celebration, thus placing a memory marker for the journey ahead. Our graduates came out

of their cocoon and became mature young men with a better sense of self. They became better community servants and dealt better with adults in their lives including parents, teachers, coaches, etc.

Expected Outcomes

The young men that went through this program should gain a better sense of self, acquire a positive resolve to excel in school and life, stay on track, gain the tools to handle peer pressure, and were plugged into a community of committed African American professionals in the Silicon Valley region concerned about their well-being. Many graduates became more active in their communities or high school organizations, pursued college education, developed better relationships with their families, and shared lessons learned from the program with their peers.

Outcomes

As a result of this ministry, I discovered that once the modules of evangelism and discipleship were taught separately, it improved the quality of dedication of the young adults as they give their lives to Christ, which helped them to become committed and dedicated church men as they learned first to evangelize and then to teach discipleship. Also as a result of this ministry, three of the young adult men were nominated as Junior Stewards.

Through these ministries, I discovered that Christ used evangelism in an ordinary way to lead people to Himself in order that they might have life and have it more abundantly. As discipleship is taught through training and support ministries, there are

opportunities for us to minister all around, we have a responsibility to develop alertness of mind and the desire to share God's love that will enable us to take advantage of every opportunity by which the Lord leads us day by day. We must study to develop a witnessing mindset, ever asking God to give us the ability and the knowledge to see. We must ask God for a heart that is strong enough to use these opportunities for His glory.

Summary of Learning

Since the beginning of this project, I am pleased to report that through the separate teaching and training of evangelism and discipleship, it is evident that if the two were taught as a single model, it could prove to be more effective in the spiritual growth of the church. The congregants, context associates and me have all observed, as we witness Sunday after Sunday the evidence of true evangelism and the fruit of discipleship being displayed as parents bring their children, husbands bringing wives and vice versa as well as other members who make up a family unit bring a love one to be offered to the work of Christ.

Through the survey using social media and then to the members directly, along with the interview questionnaire given to the content associates, the following is a result of the projects findings:

Through using the survey monkey tool along with social media, nine questions were asked using the following method: The Linkert Scale, Multiple Choice and a brief statement on how they would define discipleship and evangelism and are the terms interchangeable? These questions were designed to test the knowledge of the participants regarding their ability to differentiate between discipleship and evangelism since the

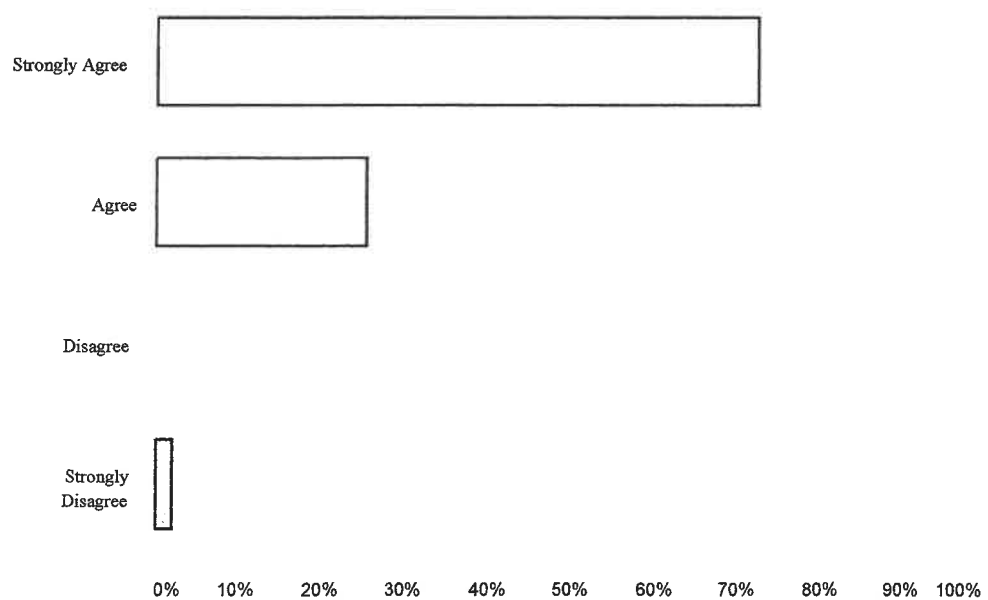
beginning of this research. Questions 1-4 deals with discipleship, while questions 5-9 deals with evangelism.

Using the survey monkey via social media with forty-nine persons responding, based on a 100% scale the results are as follows:

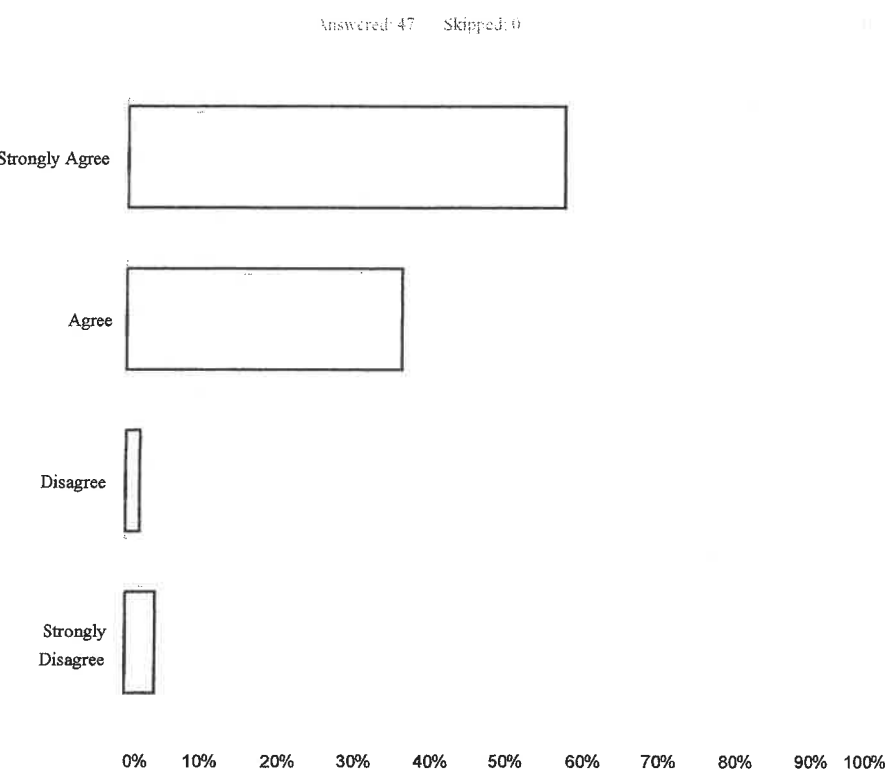
Q1 A disciple is one who is modeling and teaching the principles of Jesus Christ.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-------------------|-----------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 72.34% | 34 |
| Agree | 25.53% | 12 |
| Disagree | 0.00% | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2.13% | 1 |
| Total | | 47 |

Answered: 47 Skipped: 0

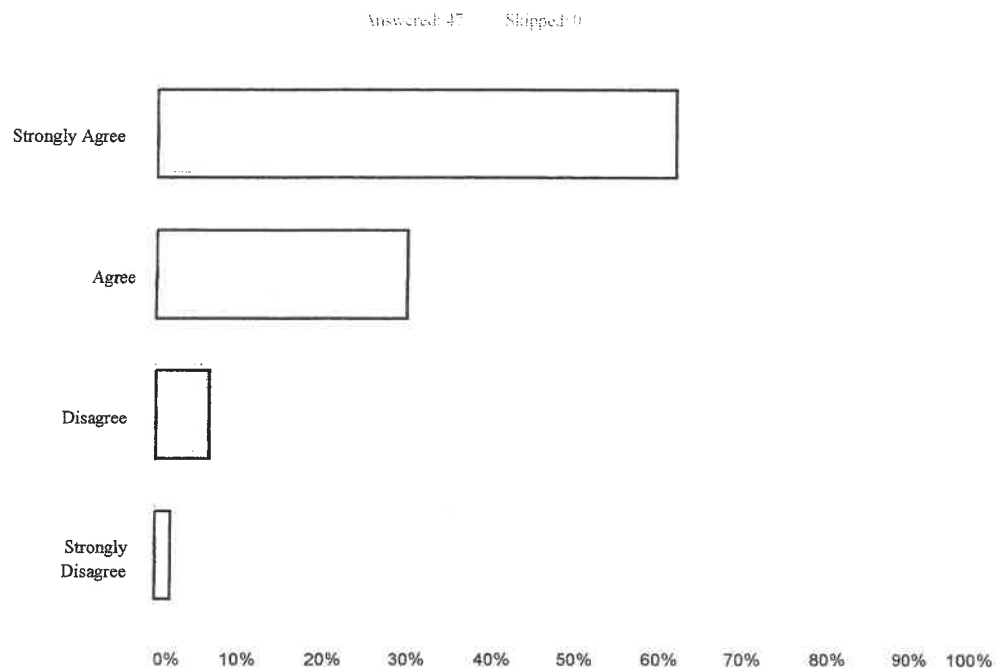


Q2 A Disciple is one who invites others to join them at their church.



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-------------------|-----------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 57.45% | 27 |
| Agree | 36.17% | 17 |
| Disagree | 2.13% | 1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4.26% | 2 |
| Total | | 47 |

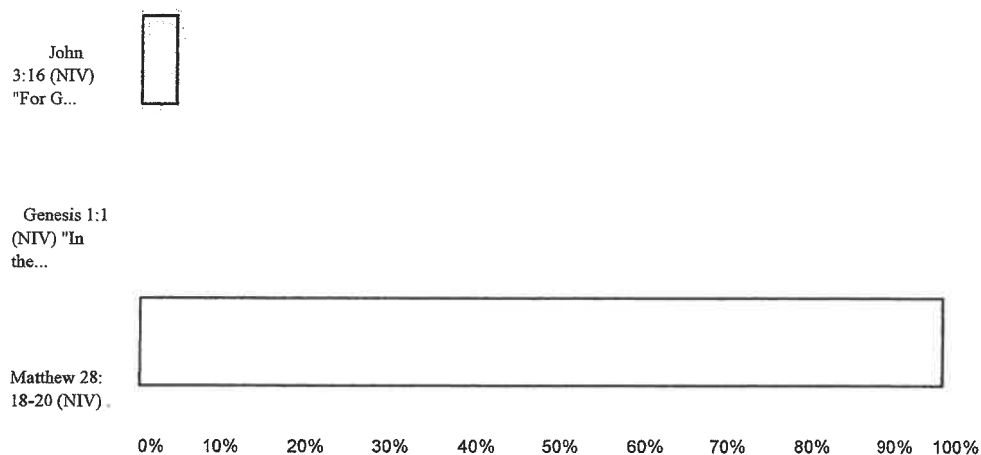
Q3 A disciple is one who participates in the ministries at their church.



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-------------------|-----------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 61.70% | 29 |
| Agree | 29.79% | 14 |
| Disagree | 6.38% | 3 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2.13% | 1 |
| Total | | 47 |

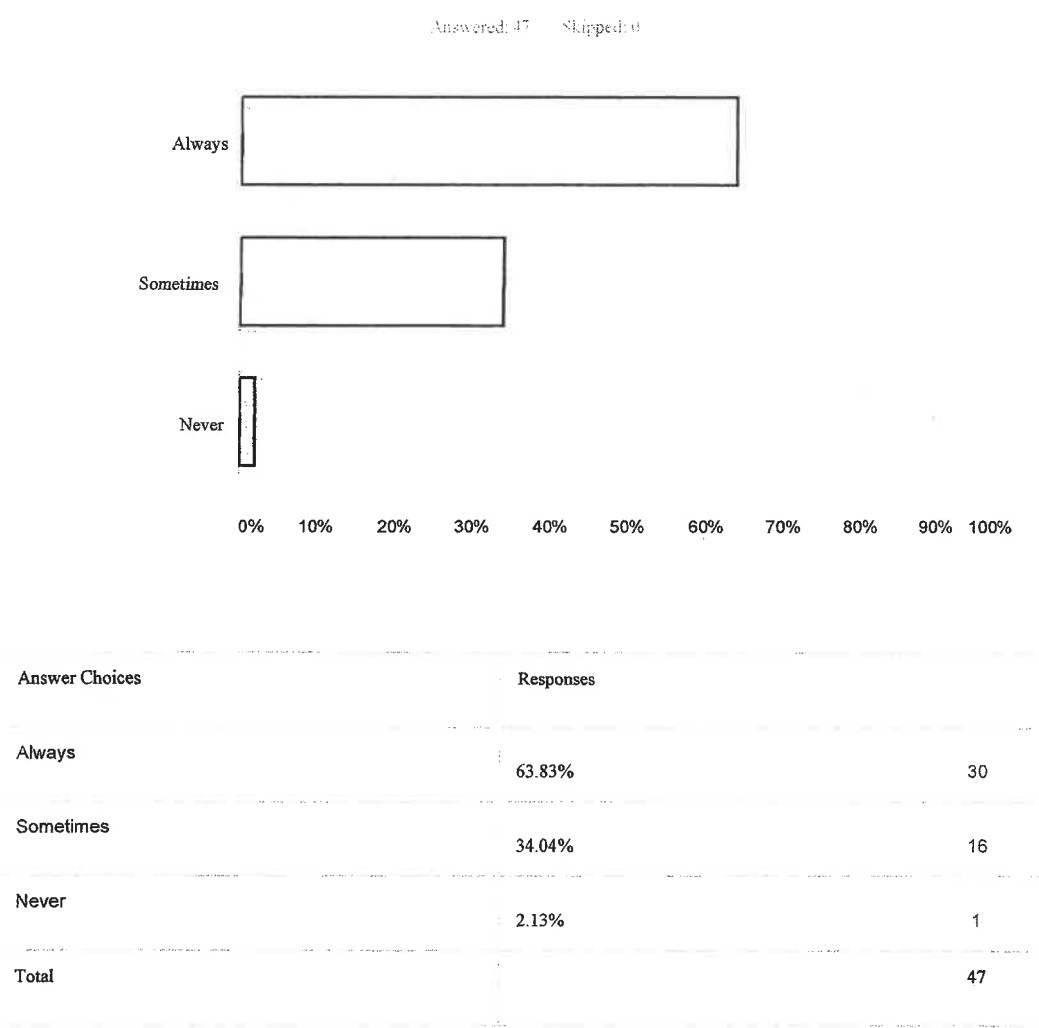
Q4 Which of the following best describe discipleship?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 2

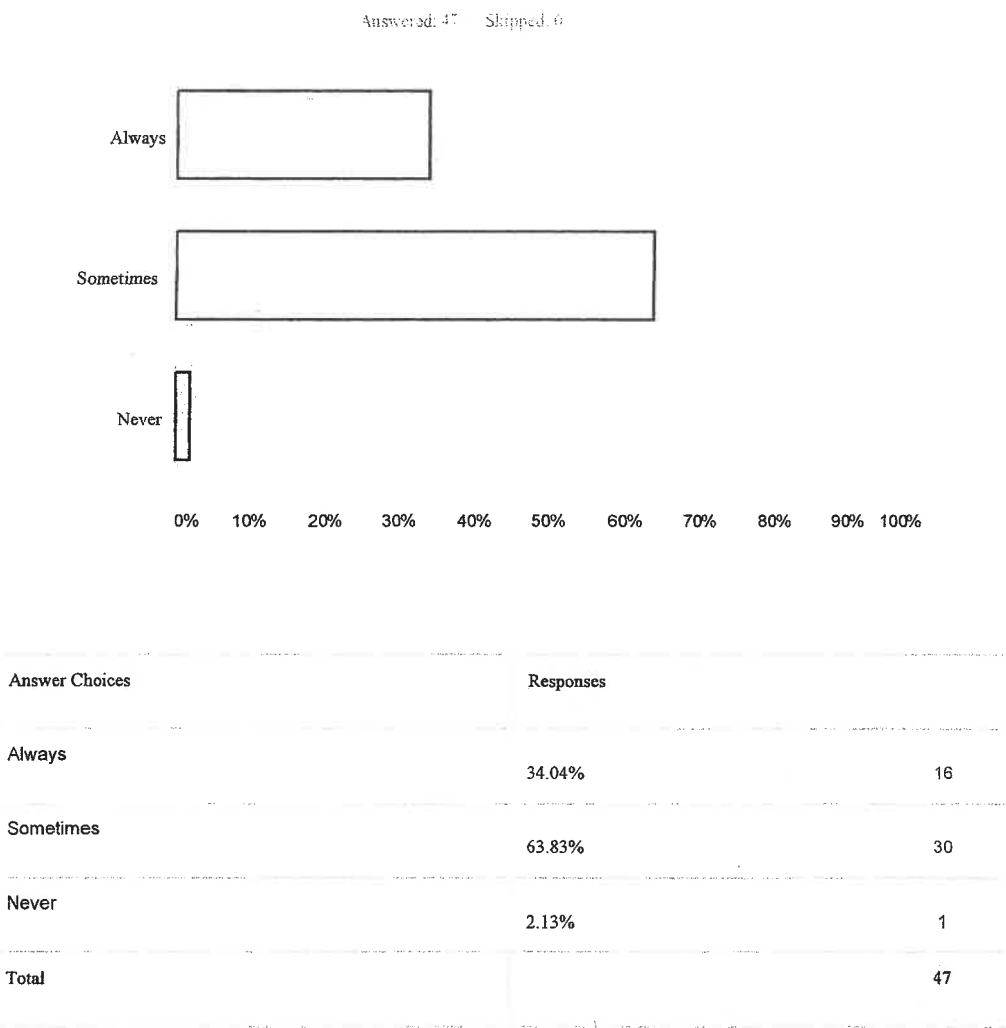


| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|-----------|----|
| John 3:16 (NIV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." | 4.44% | 2 |
| Genesis 1:1 (NIV) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." | 0.00% | 0 |
| Matthew 28: 18-20 (NIV) "18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."" | 95.56% | 43 |
| Total | | 45 |

Q5 How often does your church reach out to the unchurched?

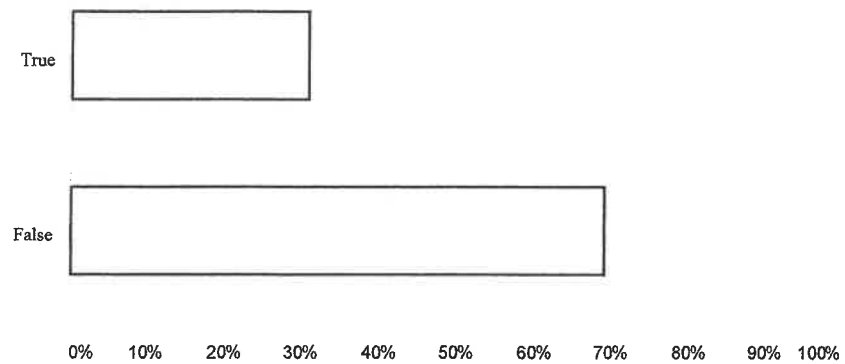


Q6 How often do you interact with your community?



Q7 The local church dressing code prevents the unchurched from attending the Sunday morning worship.

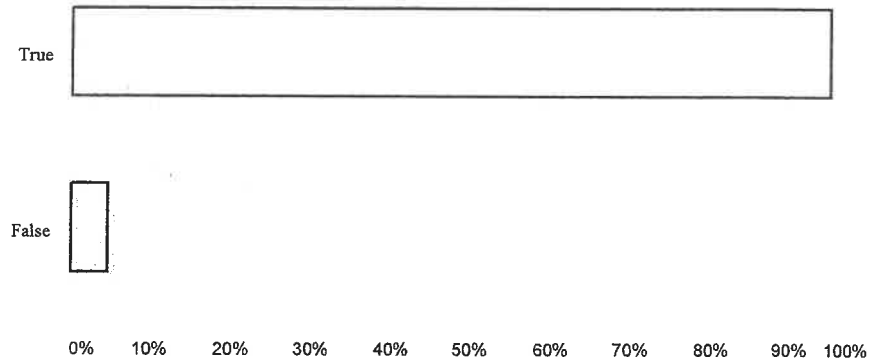
Answered: 42 Skipped: 5



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| True | 30.95% | 13 |
| False | 69.05% | 29 |
| Total | | 42 |

Q8 Radio, television and other marketing sources can aid in reaching those who are not members.

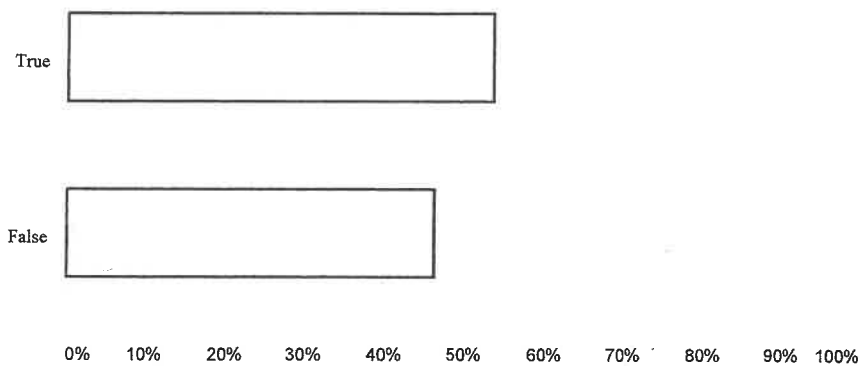
Answered: 42 Skipped: 5



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| True | 95.24% | 40 |
| False | 4.76% | 2 |
| Total | | 42 |

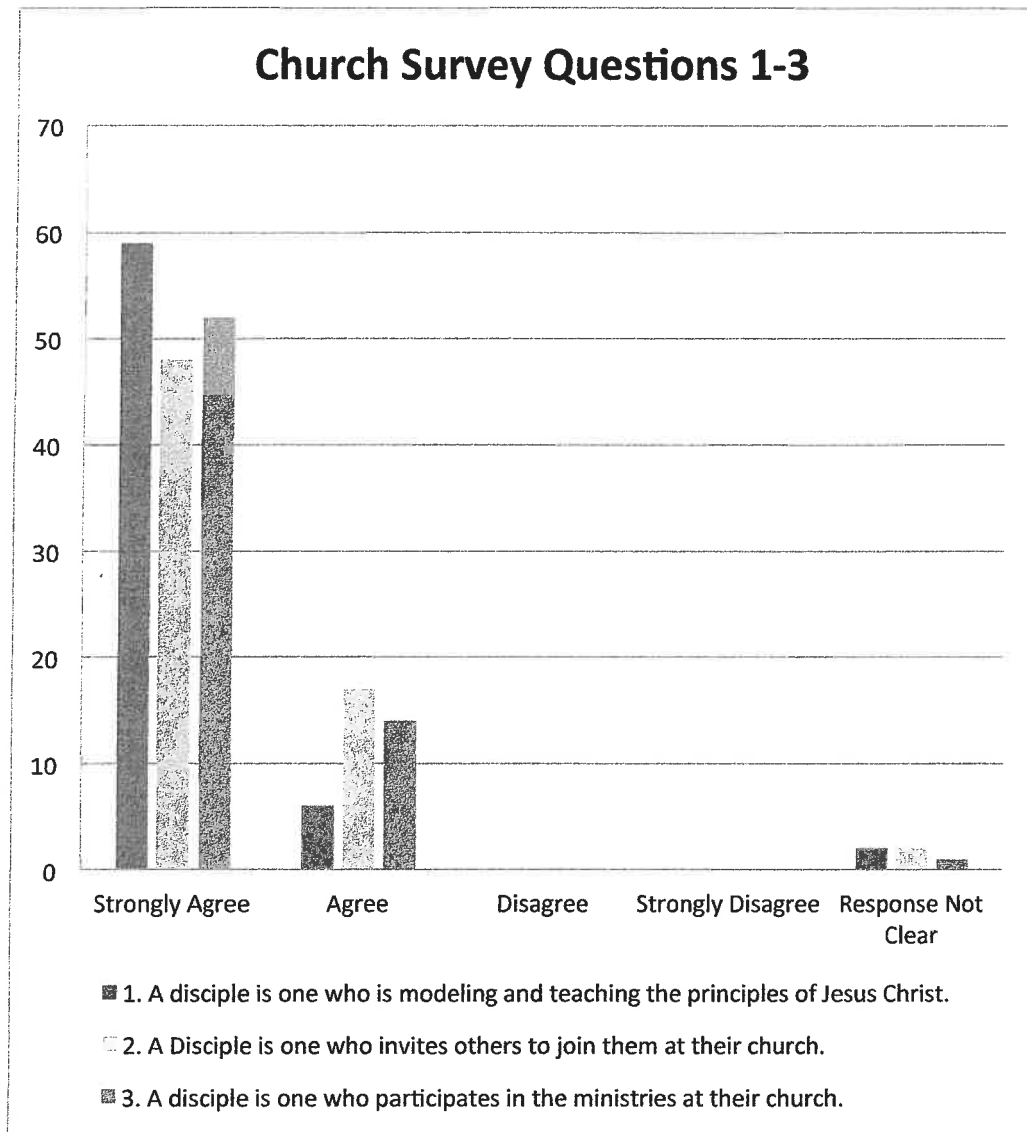
Q9 Most unchurched people have never been visited by church goers.

Answered: 41 Skipped: 6

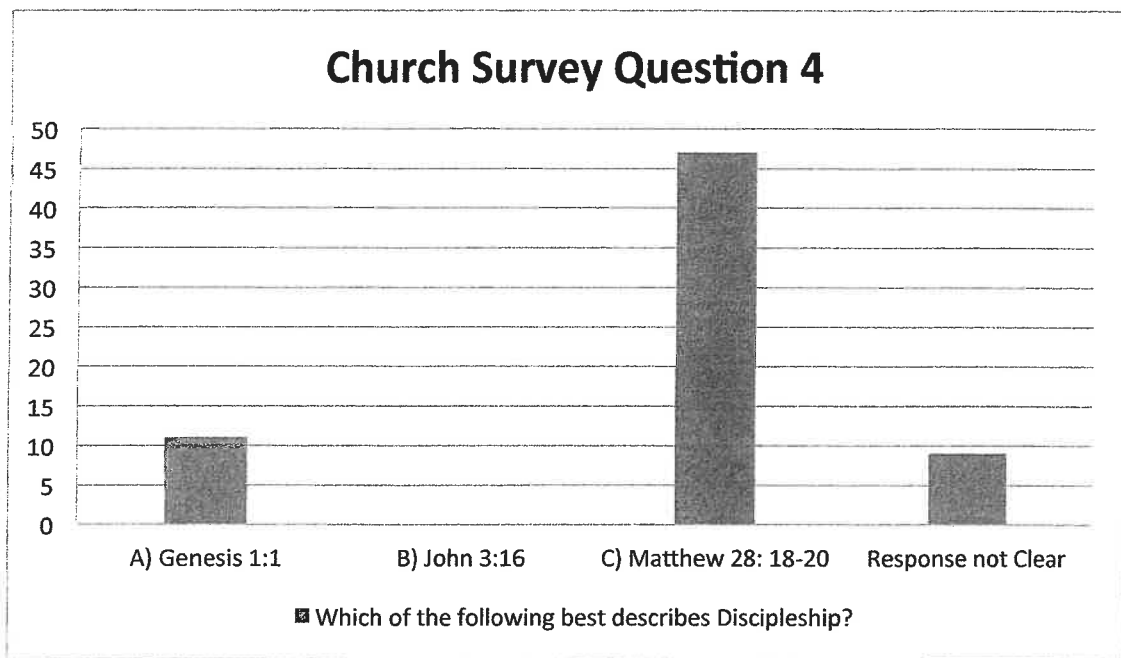


| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| True | 53.66% | 22 |
| False | 46.34% | 19 |
| Total | | 41 |

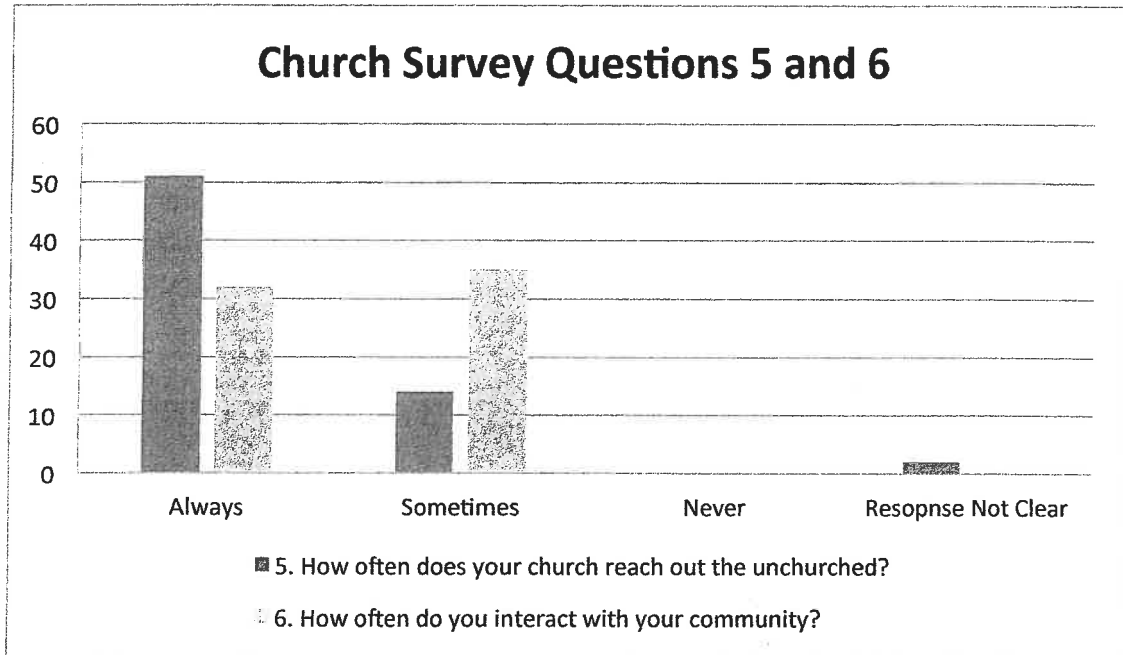
Using the same survey as mentioned above, via handouts given to congregants who did not have access to social media, but desired to be a part of the survey. This survey will reveal the results of sixty-seven persons responding.



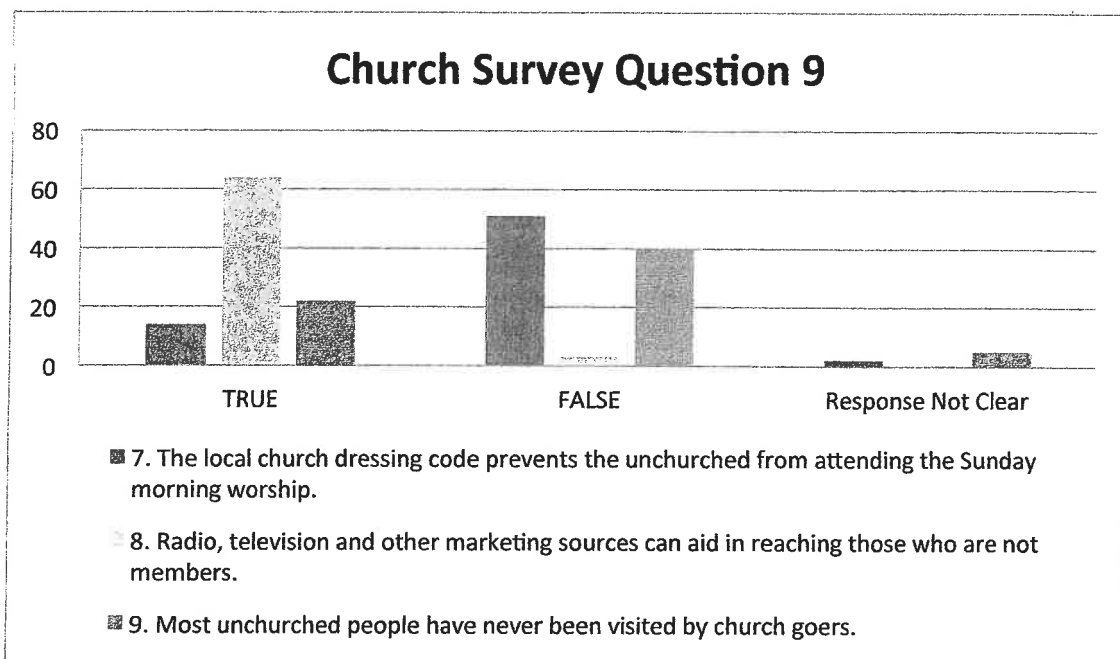
| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Response Not Clear |
|------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Question 1 | 59 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Question 2 | 48 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Question 3 | 52 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 1 |



| | A) Genesis 1:1 | B) John 3:16 | C) Matthew 28: 18-20 | Response Not Clear |
|--|----------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 4. Which of the following best describes Discipleship? | 11 | 0 | 47 | 9 |



| | Always | Sometimes | Never | Response Not Clear |
|------------|--------|-----------|-------|--------------------|
| Question 5 | 51 | 14 | 0 | 2 |
| Question 6 | 32 | 35 | 0 | 0 |



| | True | False | Response Not Clear |
|------------|------|-------|--------------------|
| Question 7 | 14 | 51 | 2 |
| Question 8 | 64 | 3 | 0 |
| Question 9 | 22 | 40 | 5 |

In regards to question 10, of the 114 responses, only thirty-one persons answered the essay part of the survey. Question 10 states the following: How would you define Discipleship and Evangelism? Are these terms interchangeable? The survey showed that while more than half of the respondents have a clear understanding of the meaning of discipleship and evangelism. In response to the second half of the question, six of the thirty-one respondents believe that discipleship and evangelism are interchangeable. There is still work for this researcher to do.

I also conducted a questionnaire interview with the six Context Associates. The following is a summary based on the data collected from the four questions asked as they

related to the spiritual growth of the Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Question 1: Have my teaching, ministry and preaching helped you to distinguish between evangelism and discipleship?

All of them agreed that the teaching and preaching ministry has helped them to distinguish the difference between evangelism and discipleship as they have developed the responsibility and commitment to lead others to Christ and to encourage them to become disciples.

Question 2: How has it helped you personally?

All have declared to be equipped with the necessary tools to evangelize as they model the example of Jesus Christ with boldness to express his Lordship.

Question 3: How do you feel about the growth of our church since I have been here?

They all felt that the Church has grown tremendously over the past forty-seven months through the separate teaching of evangelism and discipleship. They further agreed that the Church has grown spiritually and numerically.

Question 4: On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the growth of the church for the last forty-seven months?

90% agreed on a scale of 5, the church has experienced growth for the last 47 months.

10% felt as though we have not reached our potential growth and gave a scale of 4.

Conclusion

Upon the implementation of this project, I discovered that the teaching of evangelism and discipleship was most effective when taught as an individual model rather than one unit. During the teaching and training, along with the pilot ministries

(Marriage, Prison and Zwadi) at the end of this research, I was pleased to say that based on the surveys taken, growth in knowledge was detected, as well as growth in spiritual maturity.

The design of the project was to first examine the spiritual growth and maturity of Greater Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church as we sought to implement ministry models, which would insure that spiritual maturity was achieved. The modeled ministries were designed to offer an opportunity for all to participate as we learned first to evangelize and then to understand the call to discipleship. We have reached beyond the walls to offer a hand to the unchurched as well as those who were affiliated but are not yet members to strengthen the family band by offering them an opportunity to enjoy the same amenities as full members without constraints.

I learned that if evangelism and discipleship is to be taught to make a difference in the 21st century, then they should be taught in two different models, meaning there should be a distinction between the two. Evangelism offers good news to the new believer, while discipleship calls one to model the lifestyle of Jesus Christ through obedience and following.

During the completion of this project, I was made aware of my own contribution to my home bound members through my Media Ministry as well social media (face book) which brought weekly visitors to the church, which is an excellent example of evangelizing through technology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alling, Roger, and David J. Schlafer, eds. *Sermons That Work: Preaching as Prophetic Calling*. Vol. 12. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 2004.
- Ammerman, Nancy. *Congregation and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997.
- Barclay, William. "Gospel of Matthew," *New Daily Study Bible*, Revised ed. Vol. 2. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Barna, George. *Leaders On Leadership: Wisdom, Advice, and Encouragement On the Art of Leading God's People*. The Leading Edge Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014.
- _____. *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches: Being Strategic in Your God-Given Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999.
- Baxter, Daniel Minort. *Bishop Richard Allen and His Spirit*. Philadelphia, PA: A.M.E. Book Concern, 1923.
- Blackaby, Henry T. and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People On to God's Agenda*. Rev. ed. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2011.
- Blanchard, Kenneth H., and Phil Hodges. *Lead like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Times*. Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2005.
- Boers, Arthur P. *Servants and Fools: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015.
- Booth, Charles E. *Bridging the Breach: Evangelical Thought and Liberation in the African-American Preaching Tradition*. Chicago, IL: Urban Ministries, 2000.
- _____. *Stronger in My Broken Places: Claiming a Life of Fullness in God*. Chicago, IL: MMGI Books, 2011.
- Borek, John, Danny Lovett, and Elmer L. Towns. *The Good Book On Leadership: Case Studies from the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005.
- Bothuel, Ethel Canty. *Preparing a Plain Path: Nurturing Son and Daughter Ministers On Their Christian Journey*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010.

- Breen, Mike. *Building a Discipling Culture*. 2nd ed. Pawley's Island, SC: 3DM Publishing, 2014.
- Briner, Bob, and Ray Pritchard. *Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2008.
- Bright, Bill. *Handbook for Christian Maturity: Bible Study, Ten Basic Steps Toward Christian Maturity*. Peachtree City, GA: New Life Pub., 2002.
- Butler, Trent. *Holman Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991.
- Canada, David. *Spiritual Leadership in the Small Membership Church: Ministry in the Small Membership Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.
- Charleston Regional Development Alliance. "Population." Accessed April 11, 2013. www.crda.org/business/market_profile.nd.
- Champion, G. Lovelace Sr. *Reaching, Teaching and Growing African-American Believers: Christian Education for Adults, Youth and Children*. Camarillo, CA: Xulon Press, 2004.
- Chilcote, Paul Wesley, and Lacey C. Warner, eds. *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.
- Chopra, Deepak. *The Soul of Leadership: Unlocking Your Potential for Greatness*. New York, NY: Harmony, 2010.
- Christensen, Michael J. and Carl E. Savage. *Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000.
- Coleman, Robert Emerson. *The Master Plan of Discipleship*. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell Publishing, 1987.
- _____. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 2nd. ed. San Francisco, CA: Revell Pub., 2010.
- Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Press, 1970.
- Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor—and Yourself*. expanded ed. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2012.
- Cordeiro, Wayne. *The Irresistible Church: 12 Traits of a Church Heaven Applauds*. Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House Pub, 2011.

- Dickerson, Dennis C. *African American Preachers and Politics: The Carneys of Chicago*. Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi, 2010.
- Dodson, Jonathan K. *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- Doehring, Carrie. *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006.
- Dorrien, Gary. *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.
- Dungy, Tony, and Nathan Whitaker. *The Mentor Leader*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010.
- Edwards, Jonathan. "The Resolutions: Center for Reformed Theology & Apologetic." Accessed October 15, 2014 http://www.reformed.org/documents/Edwards/index.html?mainframe=/documents/edwards/j_edwards_resolutions.html.
- Eims, LeRoy. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.
- Elwell, Walter A. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1996.
- Fay, William, and Linda E. Shepherd. *Share Jesus without Fear*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999.
- Felder, Cain Hope. *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Frank, Thomas Edward. *The Soul of the Congregation: An Invitation to Congregational Reflection*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.
- Franklin, Robert Michael. *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Frazier, F. Franklin. *The Negro Church in America*. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University, 1964.
- Geiger, Eric, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation. *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow*. Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2012.
- Gibbs, Eddie, and Ryan K. Bolger. *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.
- Gongwer, Todd G. *Lead—for God's Sake!* Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Pub., 2010.
- "Greater St. Luke A.M.E. Church 76th Anniversary Booklet." *Greater St. Luke A.M.E.C. Anniversary Committee*. Charleston, SC (May 16, 1954): 1.

- Gregory, Joel C., ed. *Oxford Sermons Vol. 2*. Fort Worth, TX: Hupomone Press, 2008.
- Griffin, D. Darrell. *Navigating Pastoral Leadership: In the Transition Zone*. Chicago, IL: MMGI Books, 2012.
- Hamilton, Adam. *Leading Beyond the Walls: Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Unchurched*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- Hammett, Edward H. *Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age: Building Bridges Instead of Barriers*. St. Louis, MO: Lake Hickory Resources, 2005.
- Harris, James H. *Pastoral Theology: A Black-Church Perspective*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Helmick, Raymond G. and Rodney Lawrence Petersen, eds. *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2002.
- “Faith Alone.” *Grace In Focus*. Accessed February 2, 2014. <http://faithalone.org/>.
- Hull, Bill. *The Disciple-Making Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1990.
- _____. *The Disciple-Making Pastor: Leading Others On the Journey of Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.
- Hunter, George G. *The Apostolic Congregation: Church Growth Reconceived for a New Generation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009.
- _____. *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987.
- Hybels, Bill. *Courageous Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- Jeanrond, Werner G. *Call and Response: The Challenge of Christian Life*. New York, NY: Continuum Publishers, 1995.
- Jones, Lawrence Neale. *African Americans and the Christian Churches: 1619-1860*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2007.
- Jones, Major J. *Black Awareness: A Theology of Hope*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971.
- King, Martin Luther. *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1986.
- Keeping up with the Jones. “Black History Month: Denmark Vesey Rebellion,” Accessed May 16, 2014. <http://keepingupwiththejones-markjones.blogspot.com/2010/02/black-history-month-denmark-vesey.html>.

- Lincoln, C. Eric, and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African-American Experience*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1990.
- Linthicum, Robert C. *Transforming Power: Biblical Strategies for Making a Difference in Your Community*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- MacArthur, John. "What Does It Mean to Make Disciples?" Accessed April 11, 2013. www.gty.org (blog).
- MacDonald, William and Arthur L. Farstad. *Believer's Bible Commentary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.
- Mannoia, Kevin W., and Larry Walkermeyer. *15 Characteristics of Effective Pastors*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007.
- Marsh, Charles. *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice from the Civil Rights Movement to Today*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2005.
- Moriarty, Glendon. *Pastoral Care of Depression: Helping Clients Heal Their Relationship with God*. Haworth Series in Chaplaincy. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2006.
- Maxwell, John C. *Developing the Leader Within You*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Business, 1993.
- _____. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and The People Will Follow You*. Rev. ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007.
- _____. *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions: Your Foundation for Successful Leadership*. New York, NY: Center Street, 2014.
- McClain, William B. *Come Sunday: The Liturgy of Zion*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- McFague, Sallie. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982.
- McKenzie, Vashti M. *Not without a Struggle: Leadership Development for African American Women in Ministry*. Cleveland, OH: United Church, 1996.
- McMickle, Marvin A. *Where Have All the Prophets Gone? Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2006.
- McNeal, Reggie. *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Messer, Donald E. *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989.

- Miller, Herb. *Leadership is the Key: Unlocking Your Ministry Effectiveness*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Miller, James F. *Go Build a Church! : Spiritual Administration for Church Growth*. Enumclaw, WA: WinePress Publishers, 2007.
- Nature of True Virtue*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1960.
- Nelson, Jack A. *Hunger for Justice: The Politics of Food and Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1980.
- Neuger, Christie Cozad. *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.
- New Catechism for African Methodists*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: AME Sunday School Union, 2003.
- Noll, Mark A. *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Nouwen, Henri J M. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. Image Ed. New York, NY: Image Books, 1990, 1972.
- Packer, J. I. *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1961.
- Pate, Steve A. and C. Gene. Wilkes. *Evangelism Where You Live: Engaging Your Community*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008.
- Perkins, John. *Restoring At-risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995. '
- Petersen, Jim. *Living Proof*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1989.
- Powe, F Douglas. *New Wine, New Wineskins: How African American Congregations Can Reach New Generations*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012.
- Pruyser, Paul W. *The Minister as Diagnostician: Personal Problems in Pastoral Perspective*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976.
- Putman, Jim. *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010.
- Raboteau, Albert J. *A Fire in the Bones*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Rainer, Thom S. *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive*. Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 2014.

- _____. *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2005.
- _____. *I Am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude That Makes the Difference*. Nashville, TN: B & H Pub. Group, 2013.
- _____. *The Unchurched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages as Keys to Sharing Your Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Rainer, Thom S., and Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 2006.
- Rankin, Nancy Burgin, and Beverly Bowyer Copley. *Checking Vital Signs: Assessing Your Local Church Potential*. Graham, NC: Plowpoint Press, 2007.
- Robertson, David. *Denmark Vesey: the Buried Story of America's Largest Slave Rebellion and the Man Who Led It*. New York, NY: Vintage Publishing, 2000.
- Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Ruffcorn, Kevin E. *Rural Evangelism: Catching the Vision*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.
- Sanders, J Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership*. Commitment to Spiritual Growth Series. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994.
- Scazzero, Peter, and Warren Bird. *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Schnase, Robert C. *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007.
- Smallman, Stephen. "Discipleship, a Synonym for Christian Living." *The Journal of Christian Education* (Summer 2013, 1996): 4-7.
- Southerland, Dan. *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2000.
- Staub, Ervin. *The Roots of Goodness and Resistance to Evil: Inclusive Caring, Moral Courage, Altruism Born of Suffering, Active Bystandership, and Heroism*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Stetzer, Ed, and Mike Dodson. *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*. Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2007.
- Stewart, Carlyle Fielding. *Growing the African American Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006.

- _____. *African American Church Growth: 12 Principles of Prophetic Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Stone, Bryan P. *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007.
- Stowell, Joseph M. *Redefining Leadership: Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.
- _____. *Shepherding the Church: Effective Spiritual Leadership in a Changing Culture*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1997.
- Swanson, Roger K. and Shirley F. Clement. *The Faith-sharing Congregation: Developing a Strategy for the Congregation as Evangelist*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1997.
- Taylor, Mark L. *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.
- "This Far by Faith." Accessed April 28, 2014. <http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/>.
- The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version: With Special Annotations Relative to the African/Endemic Perspective*. Nashville, TN: J.C. Winston Publishers, 1993.
- "The World Knowledge Library Masterliness." Accessed November 5, 2013. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dakota_Heights,_Michigan.
- Thompson, Alfred L. *Bars, Bridges, and Blessings*. Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2015.
- Thompson, W Oscar, and Carilyn Thompson Ritzmann. *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999.
- Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Tidwell, Jerry N. *Outreach Teams That Win: G.R.O.W.* Nashville, TN: Convention, 1998.
- Tinley, Charles. *We Shall Overcome Someday*. Nashville, TN: AMEC Hymnal, 1998.
- Thompson, George B. *How to Get along with Your Church: Creating Cultural Capital for Doing Ministry*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2001.
- Townsend, John Sims. *Leadership Beyond Reason: How Great Leaders Succeed by Harnessing the Power of Their Values, Feelings, and Intuition*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009.

- Wacker, Grant. *Religion in Nineteenth Century America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Waller, James. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. 2nd ed. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Ward-Royster, Willa. *How I Got Over: Clara Ward and the World Famous Ward Singers*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1997.
- Warren, Richard. *The Purpose-driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2002.
- Watkins, Ralph Basui. *Hip-Hop Redemption: Finding God in the Rhythm and the Rhyme. Engaging Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Watkins, William D. *The Transforming Habits of a Growing Christian*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2004.
- Webber, Robert. *Ancient-future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-forming Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003.
- Weems, Lovett H. *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture, and Integrity*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- _____. *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- West, Cornel. *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism*. New York, NY: Penguin, 2004.
- “What is Philosophy Anyway?” *Molloy College Department of Philosophy*. Accessed October 24, 2014. <https://www.northampton.edu/Documents/Subsites/HaroldWeiss/Intro%20to%20Philosophy/WHATISPHILOSOPHYANYWAY.pdf>.
- White, James R. *Burning Issues Series*. Vol. 2, *Pulpit Crimes: the Criminal Mishandling of God's Word*. Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006.
- _____. *God Who Justifies*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2007.
- Wiesel, Elie, and Marion Wiesel. *The Trial of God (As It Was Held On February 25, 1649, in Shamgorod): A Play*. Translated by Marion Wiesel. New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1995.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus' Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2006.
- Wimber, John and Kevin Springer. *Power Evangelism*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row (Publishers), 1986.

Woods, Charles Jeffrey. *Better Than Success: 8 Principles of Faithful Leadership*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001.

Yancey, Philip. *What's so Amazing About Grace?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

Young, G. Martin. *In Search of Rizpah (The Liberated Church Watching Over the Dead)*. 2 Vols. Decatur, GA: Orman Press, 2002.

_____. *In the Hands of the Savior: Healing the Bruised Reeds and Smoking Flaxes*. Decatur, GA: Orman Press, 1997.

_____. *Insanity of Theology: God-Talkers Dressed with Inner Vestments*. Chicago, IL: MMGI Books, 2014.

_____. *Zechariah's Visions in the Night: The Church Being A Mid-Wife for Prisoners of Hope*. Mountain View, CA: Google Books, 2012.